

## Israeli jets raid South Lebanon

NABATIYEH, Lebanon (R) — Israeli warplanes on Sunday raided suspected Hizbullah targets just north of Israel's South Lebanon occupation zone, security sources said. They said the jets fired rockets into Jabal Safi in Iqim Al Tufah a mountain ridge used by Hizbullah fighters to launch attacks against Israel and allied militia forces in the border buffer zone. There was no immediate word on casualties or damage in the air attack, the 20th into Lebanon this year. In Israel, the army said in a statement that air force planes attacked "terrorist targets" in the morning in Jabal Safi area. "The pilots reported accurate hits and all planes returned safely to base," the statement added. The air raid came two days after one Israeli soldier was killed and one wounded when Hizbullah guerrillas shelled their post in the zone on Friday. Four Hizbullah fighters were killed in those clashes. Hours later Israeli planes raided Hizbullah targets north of the zone but no one was hurt. Hizbullah is fighting to oust 1,000 Israeli troops and their 3,000 South Lebanon Army militia allies from the South Lebanon zone the Jewish state said it set up to prevent raids on its northern border.

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## Algerian council adopts election rules

ALGIERS (AFP) — Algeria's National Transition Council adopted Sunday a law spelling out new arrangements for the country's two ruling chambers to be elected in three months' time. Under the new rules, the National Assembly will have 380 seats while the Higher National Council will have 144. Eight seats in the National Assembly are reserved for Algerians abroad. The arrangements are the latest batch of rules adopted by the National Transition Council, a special body set up by President Liamine Zoulat to prepare for elections later this year. Laws on political parties and a proportional voting system have already been approved by the council which Mr. Zoulat set up on Jan. 25.

## Kuwait sets up national security council

KUWAIT (AP) — Kuwait has set up a national security council that will be trusted with guaranteeing the state's security, the official Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) reported Sunday. KUNA quoted Abdul Aziz Al Dakhil, the minister of state for cabinet affairs, as saying the council would formulate the policies and programmes needed for safeguarding Kuwait's security. The council was necessitated by the developments in the area and the consequences they could have on Kuwait, he said without elaboration. The proposed council will be headed by the crown prince and prime minister, Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah Al Sabah, and will comprise the ministers of foreign affairs, defence, finance, information, and the minister of state for cabinet affairs. The council will be officially formed when the emir, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, signs a decree to that effect at a yet unspecified date.

## Kuwaiti prince killed in UAE race

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A Kuwaiti prince was killed in an international powerboat race in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Sunday when his speeding boat flew into the air, organisers said. Sheikh Khalid Al Sabah, a member of the Kuwaiti royal family, suffered a fractured skull when his head hit the boat's deck after it turned over several times in the air, they said. "His skull was broken and he bled profusely. We did our best to rescue him and doctors could not do anything to save his life," said Ahmad Al Qutubsi, chairman of the committee organising the second phase of the race. The body of Sheikh Khalid, a contestant in several regional boat races, would be flown to Kuwait after medical examinations are completed, he told reporters. Sheikh Khalid was among 92 contestants in Sunday's race, which was won by Finnish participants.

## Cars torched in National Front town

VITROLLES, France (AFP) — Six vehicles and a motorcycle were torched here overnight on Saturday in this southern French town with a heavy immigrant population and now ruled by the extreme right National Front. Last Tuesday nine vehicles were set ablaze following racist remarks by front Mayor Catherine Megret, who claimed in the German newspaper Berliner Zeitung that "crime is a synonym for immigration." Saturday night's arson attacks occurred in working class neighbourhoods with a strong immigrant presence. Ms. Megret won control of the city in a municipal by-election on Feb. 9, which was marked by two nights of violence in which vehicles were burned and petrol bombs thrown at shop windows.

# Israel hints it will not meet pullout schedule

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Tension mounted Sunday as Israel warned the Palestinians not to declare an independent state and hinted it might not meet Friday's deadline for a troop withdrawal in the West Bank.

Four Palestinian workers were injured in a clash with Israeli troops manning a roadblock, and gravestones were smashed at an ancient Jewish cemetery in Hebron.

The Palestinian legislature called for a general strike Monday to protest an Israeli decision to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

It was the first general strike called by the Palestinian autonomy government since September clashes that killed 80 people.

Israeli cabinet secretary Danny Naveh warned Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat not to carry out a threat to declare an independent Palestinian state.

During a visit to Cairo on Saturday, Mr. Arafat suggested he might declare a state in response to the Israeli government's decision to build the 6,500-unit settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

"Such a unilateral declaration by the Palestinian side of a Palestinian state will be a very grave violation of

agreements signed by them with the government of Israel," Mr. Naveh told Israel Radio.

However, he refused to specify how Israel would respond.

"All I can say is that Israel is certainly ready for such a step, and it will be a grave error on the part of the Palestinians if they do it," he said.

The interim Israel-Palestinian peace agreements give the Palestinians autonomy in West Bank cities and surrounding areas, but leave the final status of the Palestinian entity for talks on a permanent peace settlement scheduled to start later this month.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said he is opposed to a Palestinian state.

Israel is also committed to making three unspecified troop withdrawals from rural areas of the West Bank, the first of which is supposed to be completed by Friday.

But Israel Radio reported Sunday that the withdrawal cannot possibly be completed on time, mainly because of opposition within Mr. Netanyahu's coalition government.

Mr. Naveh said he did not know exactly when the pullout would be completed, and David Bar-Ilan, a senior aide to Mr. Netanyahu, conceded there might be delays.

Mr. Netanyahu's cabinet was to have met Tuesday to decide how much land Israel will hand over to the Palestinians in the first withdrawal, but the meeting was postponed to Thursday.

There is strong resistance to the withdrawal within Mr. Netanyahu's Likud Party, and also among its coalition partners.

Another likely delaying factor is Mr. Netanyahu's planned visit to Cairo on Wednesday to meet with Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak.

It may also take some time for the army to implement the withdrawal, Mr. Bar-Ilan said. "There might be logistical delays," he told the Associated Press. "It's a military matter."

"Our desire is not to delay the matter," Mr. Naveh told Israel Radio. "I can't tell you the exact date. The important thing is that the decision will be taken this week."

Mr. Naveh dismissed media reports that Israel had promised a larger first-stage withdrawal in return for Mr. Arafat's restrained response to the Israeli decision to build the settlement.

"There is no connection between the decision the government took on Har

(Continued on page 7)

## Netanyahu told Clinton he accepts 242 applicable to Golan — report

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told U.S. President Bill Clinton he is ready to make concessions on the Golan Heights, whose return Syria is demanding in exchange for peace, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The English-language daily the Jerusalem Post said Mr. Netanyahu had informed Mr. Clinton he is prepared to eventually make "territorial concessions" on the strategic plateau seized by Israel during the 1967 war.

Mr. Netanyahu had accepted the application of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 to the Golan, the newspaper said.

The prime minister's Likud Party has refused to say whether it considers Resolution 242, based on the principle of trading land for peace, applicable to the strategic plateau.

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar Ilan told AFP he could neither confirm nor deny whether there had been a change in the Likud position.

"During his recent trip to Washington last month, Mr. Netanyahu did not publicly mention the application of 242 to the Golan, but it is possible that the prime minister spoke of it during his talks with President Clinton," Mr. Bar Ilan said.

The Israeli media said Mr. Netanyahu had refrained

during the visit from rejecting any "territorial concessions" on the plateau.

Mr. Bar Ilan said Israel wanted to resume negotiations with Syria, which were broken off in February 1996, on the basis of the 1991 Madrid peace conference letter of invitation.

"This letter makes explicit reference to resolutions 242 and 338, but we have our own interpretation of their texts," he said. Resolution 338 calls for the implementation of 242.

Israel interprets the resolutions as calling for a withdrawal from some of the territory seized in 1967, while the Arabs and Europeans say the resolutions call for a retreat from all such territory.

Mr. Netanyahu's predecessors as prime minister, Labour Party leaders Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres, reportedly verbally accepted the idea of an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace and normalised relations with Syria.

Damascus says it will not return to the negotiating table with the current Israeli government unless it first agrees to pull out of the Golan.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported Sunday Russia has agreed to a Syrian request made two weeks ago to upgrade its armed forces.

Citing information

obtained through "diplomatic channels," the newspaper said Syria had identified three priority areas for modernisation: its air defences, army and air force.

The Syrian military is jettisoning "old equipment" but is still "capable of launching surprise attacks," a senior Israeli official was quoted by the Hebrew-language daily as saying.

Haaretz said that before the modernisation programme can go ahead, Syria will have to settle the debt of \$10 to \$15 billion it owes the former Soviet Union for previous arms purchases.

The newspaper said the two countries are working out a compromise under which Damascus would repay its debts with hard currency, goods and investments in joint ventures in Syria.

Russia would also write off part of the debt and reschedule another portion of it to be paid over 10 years.

Mr. Netanyahu is scheduled to visit Russia next week. According to Haaretz, he will discuss with Russian officials Israel's concern over renewed nuclear cooperation between Russia and Iran.

The prime minister has not yet decided whether he

(Continued on page 7)



Sheikh Jassem Ben Hamad

## Qatari crown prince arrives Wednesday

AMMAN (Petra) — Qatari Crown Prince Sheikh Jassem Ben Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani is due in Amman Wednesday on the head of a high level delegation on a two-day visit to Jordan during which he is due to meet His Majesty King Hussein. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan and senior government officials.

Sheikh Jassem has assumed his post last October upon a decree issued by the Qatari emir with approval of the Qatari ruling family.

Qatari Ambassador to Jordan Nasser Abdul Aziz Al Nasser said that Sheikh Jassem's visit here is part of on going endeavours by Qatar and Jordan to bolster brotherly ties and it will

(Continued on page 7)



His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday receives former Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak (photo by Yousef Allan)

## King, Crown Prince and Kabariti discuss peace process with Barak Likud should have consulted Arabs over settlement plan, says former Israeli minister

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday received at the Al Nadwa Palace Israeli Knesset member and Deputy leader of the Labour Party Ehud Barak and discussed with him the latest developments in the peace process and other issues of common concern.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan also held talks with Mr. Barak at the Royal Court.

Earlier Mr. Barak held talks with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on the developments in the Middle East peace process.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, said that Mr. Kabariti reaffirmed Jordan's stand with regard to Israeli Jewish settlement programmes in the occupied territories and their adverse effect on the peace process.

Mr. Barak said that Israel

should have consulted the Arabs on its plans to build homes for Israelis in Arab East Jerusalem to avoid causing anger in the Arab World.

"Every single step, every subject should be considered in a very careful and sensitive manner" concerning Arab East Jerusalem, said Mr. Barak, a former foreign minister and a strong candidate for leadership of the Labour Party (see page 12).

Mr. Barak, a former armed forces chief, told reporters on arriving here by road from Israel that he planned to discuss "ways to revive the peace process and bilateral relations."

His visit comes amid stern Jordanian condemnation of a decision by the right-wing Israeli government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab

East Jerusalem.

"We discussed the bilateral relationship with Jordan and the issues in the trilateral triangle, Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians and the overall issues of the Middle East," Mr. Barak told reporters after meeting Mr. Kabariti.

Mr. Barak said he saw "Jordan as a major contributor to the peace process and to the chances of having a Middle East which is stable, blooming and with a cooperative environment."

Mr. Barak also said he listened to "Jordanian sensitivity to the timing" of last week's Israeli government plan to boost Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

King Hussein has urged Mr. Netanyahu to reconsider the decision to build a settlement for Jews at Jabal Abu Ghneim, called Har Homa by Israel.

## Israeli plan endangers peace process, violates all agreements — Kabariti

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan on Sunday reiterated its firm and principled stand with regard to Arab Jerusalem and Israel's Jewish settlement programmes in the city, describing the Jewish state's plans to set up a Jewish settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim as posing real danger to the peace process and contravening agreements signed with the Palestinians as well as with the Jordanian and Egyptian governments.

In a statement at Parliament's regular session, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said: "Israel's settlement expansion plans in Arab Jerusalem display the Jewish state's total disregard of the feelings of the Christians and Muslims as well

as Arab people and peace-loving nations everywhere."

"Jordan considers Arab Jerusalem as part of Arab territory occupied since 1967 and one that should be returned to Palestinian sovereignty in conformity with international legitimacy and U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which rejects the annexation of other territories by force," he said.

Mr. Kabariti said that any unilateral change in the status of Jerusalem before the conclusion of a final agreement constitutes a real danger to the entire peace process.

"Jordan considers the Israeli government's decision to set up the settlement as contravening U.N. resolutions and all agreements," he added.

"Indeed, the Israeli decision violated agreements signed with the Palestinian National Authority as well as with the Jordanian and Egyptian governments, and, as such, we will insist

that Arab Jerusalem will remain an Arab city despite this decision and that the Israeli measure, if it is implemented, will harm the credibility of the entire peace process and arouse feelings of anger," stressed the prime minister.

Referring to Jordan's efforts on this issue, Mr. Kabariti said that His Majesty King Hussein had sent a message to the former Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in 1995 when his government had decided to confiscate lands within the Jerusalem area for the purpose of establishing a Jewish settlement. Rabin rescinded the decision following the King's intervention.

Mr. Kabariti also noted that King Hussein used his good offices to overcome obstacles that delayed the Israeli-Palestinian agreement over Hebron, adding that the King's diplomacy achieved major successes in that particular issue.

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## Plight of four-year-old girl exposed conditions at orphanage in Jordan Rejection of orphan by three hospitals and tip-off to Royal Court triggered King's sweeping action

By Nadia Mukhlis  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Nuha, a four-year-old orphan, is now recovering after surgery that removed an egg-sized stone from her bladder at Al Hussein Medical Centre, hardly knowing that it was her predicament that triggered a chain of events that will completely change the condition of orphaned children in Jordan.

The problem that faced Nuha, one of 186 children being brought up at Al Hussein Welfare Institute, was a consistent refusal by

three hospitals in Amman to treat her; the first hospital did not have the right equipment to treat her; the second could not spare a bed for her; and the third demanded a Ministry of Health waiver of all costs of her treatment.

Suhaila Rahal, a long-time staffer at Al Hussein Welfare Institute, had knocked almost every hospital door in Amman for Nuha and had almost given up hope that her protegee could be saved.

Then a nurse at the Italian Hospital tipped off the Royal Court of Nuha's

predicament, prompting His Majesty King Hussein to order that she be admitted immediately to Al Hussein Medical Centre and be treated at the expense of the Royal Palace.

Then came the repercussions: the King and Her Majesty Queen Noor decided to take a first-hand look at how the situation was at the orphanage in Ashrafiyeh.

"I saw with my own eyes that the place was crowded and old, lacking qualified persons to run it and help the children," said the King in a letter to Prime Minister

Abdul Karim Kabariti. "I also witnessed the low standard of health care, malnutrition, lack of cleanliness, shortage of clothes and lack of basic requirements that should exist in such foundations," the King said in the letter, which also gave instructions that Al Hashemiyyeh Palace be turned into a home for orphans.

The King also called on "all Jordanians to offer whatever they can and to improve conditions at such centres so that the children there could enjoy life, grow up and be raised in the man-

ner they deserve."

The Jordan Times visited Al Hussein Welfare Institute on Sunday and met Rania Khasawneh, who took charge on the same day as director of the institute after having worked there for one year in 1993 as its deputy director and social worker seconded by the Ministry of Social Development.

She took over along with Roulia Mohtaq, who was serving as acting director in the absence of the former director, Rubiha Ghazi.

(Continued on page 7)

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PROTEST IN AMMAN: Jordanians protest in front of the United Nations headquarters in Amman on Sunday against Israeli plans to build a new settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem (AFP photo)

## UNRWA seeks Gulf assistance

DOHA (AFP) — The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian refugees has urged Gulf Arab states to contribute more to its budget to help ease a financial crunch.

UNRWA's Chief Peter Hansen told the official Qatari news agency during a visit here that growing financial problems were undermining the organiza-

tion's relief efforts for Palestinian refugees. UNRWA provides education as well as social and health services.

"We will remain responsible for the refugees while waiting for a settlement to their problem," Mr. Hansen was quoted as saying Saturday after talks with the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. His visit to Qatar was part

of a dialogue between UNRWA and the donor countries about the organization's priorities, said the head of the organization who is on a tour of Gulf states.

With an annual budget of around \$350 million, UNRWA provides relief for more than three million Palestinian refugees who are living in Jordan, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Syria and Lebanon.

Hansen said in December in Amman that Gulf countries contributed about only one per cent of the organization's budget and its deficit would be eliminated if their contribution was raised to 15 per cent.

Saudi Arabia gives UNRWA \$1.2 million and Kuwait provides it with \$1.5 million, he said.

## Turkish military spearheads campaign against militancy

ANKARA (AFP) — The Turkish military is spearheading a legal campaign to combat extremism, and has presented the government with a 20-point plan, press reports said Sunday.

The steps are designed to thwart alleged Iranian efforts to destabilize the Turkish government, improve the functioning of the judicial system, prevent propaganda for Sharia on Islamic television and radio and ban forms of dress seen as contrary to the principles of a secular state.

The proposals were presented Friday at a meeting of the National Security Council (MGK), which groups the highest civilian and military leaders of the country, who issued a stern warning to Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan for his government's pro-Islamic slant.

The MGK chief, General

Ilhan Kilic, met Sunday with Mr. Erbakan and Tansu Ciller, head of the conservative True Path Party that shares power with Welfare in the government coalition.

No statement was made after the talks. The wide-circulation Hurriyet on Sunday said a high-ranking military official had expressed confidence that the measures would be applied, and quoted him as saying: "We have done what parliament should have done."

The plan, published in all Sunday papers, calls for tight surveillance of financial organizations controlled by religious fraternities.

It also seeks strict application of eight laws regarding Turkey's secular foundation and the prevention of infiltration by militants into the government, particularly in cities controlled by Mr.

Erbakan's pro-Islamic Welfare Party.

The military would also like to see some of what it regards as a surplus of religious schools converted into professional schools, and the closure of Koranic teaching institutions under the control of fundamentalist groups.

The plan proposes that town halls controlled by the Welfare Party be prevented from hiring former officers who were expelled from the army for their fundamentalist sympathies.

The military is also seeking a ban or strict controls on the sale of pump-action shotguns and a register listing owners of these guns, sales of which have surged in recent months, allegedly to Welfare militants.

The MGK had said after a marathon meeting Saturday that unspecified measures would be taken to defend the

secular principles of the Turkish republic, charging that "subversive groups are trying to divide the state into secular and non-secular elements."

The MGK — in theory a consultative body but whose resolutions are always implemented to the letter by the government — is believed to have opted to give Mr. Erbakan a last chance to rein in the extremists, and hence defuse persistent speculation about an impending military takeover.

The MGK denied that the military might be preparing to stage a coup against the Islamist-led government.

Tensions flared in Turkey in early February after a controversial rally by radicals in an Ankara suburb and a bill put forward by Welfare to allow women to wear Islamic head scarves at government offices.

## U.S., Saudi defence ministers plan hotline

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia and the United States have agreed to set up a hotline between their defence ministers to boost cooperation, a leading Saudi-owned newspaper said on Sunday.

Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan told the London-based Asharq Al Awsat that agreement on the telephone link was reached at his talks in Washington last week.

Prince Sultan "noted the importance of the hotline which he said reflected American confidence in Saudi Arabia," it quoted him as telling accompanying newspaper editors.

"It also shows that the United States is very concerned with the kingdom's security, the security of the Gulf and vital U.S. interests in the region."

Prince Sultan, who met U.S. President Bill Clinton, Defence Secretary William Cohen, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other top officials, said the hotline would "prevent confusion in disseminating information."

"The countries operated a hotline during the Gulf

crisis, sparked by Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. A U.S.-led Western military alliance based in Saudi liberated Kuwait six months later.

During his visit, Prince Sultan renewed pledges of cooperation with the United States in the investigation of a truck bombing that killed 19 U.S. troops last June near Dhahran — a sour point in bilateral ties.

Since then, the 5,000 U.S. troops and 35,000 U.S. civilians in Saudi Arabia have been told to act as though another attack was imminent.

Asked if the hotline reflected U.S.-Saudi fears, Prince Sultan said: "There is no great concern but we cannot guarantee that some party could not carry out incidents that could create concern in the region, whether for us or for others."

"The oil-rich Gulf Arab countries are envied for the blessings they enjoy and are hated, therefore they may try attrition...and this is what we fear and what we have to guard against."

## Firefighters preempt explosion in Bahrain

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahraini firefighters averted a potential explosion when they removed a gas cylinder from a car which had been set on fire near the Finance Ministry, an official said Sunday.

Firefighters were extinguishing a blaze in a stolen car Saturday when they discovered the gas cylinder and removed it before it could explode, the official said.

The incident occurred as some 81 members of an Iranian-backed group known as Hizbollah-Bahrain went on trial here accused of plotting to overthrow the Bahraini government, lawyers said.

Political unrest erupted in Bahrain in December 1994 with mainly Shiite Muslim demands for the restoration of the parliament which the Sunni Muslim government dissolved in 1975.

At least 26 people, including police officers, have been killed in the violence which the authorities have blamed on Iran. Tehran has consistently denied the charges.

Lawyers, said 54 of the accused Hizbollah members have been arrested but another 27 who are still at large will be tried by the state security court in their absence.

If found guilty, they

could face the death penalty, and there is no appeal from the state security court. There has been no official confirmation of the trial.

"The trial began on Saturday and is continuing," an official, who requested anonymity, told Reuters. "It is open only to the defendants' families and their lawyers."

Bahraini in June accused Iran of plotting with a "terrorist" group to overthrow the Gulf Arab state's government by force. It also said it arrested around 60 people in connection with the alleged plot.

Iran denied interfering in the internal affairs of Bahrain.

At least 28 people have been killed and hundreds have been detained since the unrest, involving bombings, arson attacks, sabotage and riots, erupted.

The suspects were accused of joining the military wing of the Bahraini Hizbollah group, creating an organization aimed at toppling the government.

They were also accused of illegal possession of weapons and contacts with a foreign country. Political parties are banned in Bahrain.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Nateq-Nouri's Russia visit delayed

TEHRAN (R) — A visit to Russia by Iran's Parliament Speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, a strong candidate in presidential elections in May, has been delayed because of an expected Russian cabinet reshuffle, the Iranian news agency IRNA said on Saturday. In a report from Moscow, the agency quoted an "informed source" as saying the three-day official visit due to be held in mid-April had been postponed "due to the likelihood of drastic changes in the Russian government". It was not clear if the postponement came at the initiative of Russian officials before the reshuffle widely believed to be due next week. Mr. Nateq-Nouri, nominated by a conservative Islamic clerical group that has a majority in parliament, has kept a high media profile ahead of the May 23 polls that will choose a successor to President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

### Women demonstrate against Islamists in London

LONDON (AFP) — Several hundred women turned out night in London to demonstrate their opposition to Islamic fundamentalism, in response to a call by the Iranian opposition. The "women's solidarity against fundamentalism" meeting was organised by the Iranian National Resistance Council (INRC) in association with the Association of Iranian women in Britain, an INRC spokesman said. The rally came a week before International Woman's Day on March 8.

### Netherlands to help Egyptian archaeology

CAIRO (AFP) — The Netherlands will help Egypt set up an archeology restoration center, the Egyptian Supreme Council of antiquities (SCA) said on Sunday. The center will be set up in the town of faqus in the northern Delta province of Sharqiyah, the SCA said in a statement, adding that the council will provide necessary funds for the building. The Netherlands, represented by its embassy in Egypt and the Cairo-based Netherlands Institute of Archeology, will equip the center with sophisticated restoration material, it added. The Institute of archeology will also carry out three-month courses to train Egyptians in the technique of restoring "pottery and bones," the statement said.

### German dies in fall during Yemen visit

SANA (AP) — A German woman apparently fell to her death during a camel expedition in a mountainous area in southern Yemen, the German embassy said Sunday. The Arabic daily Al Ayam reported that the 67-year-old woman disappeared last Tuesday during a camel ride in the mountains of Hadramawt province. The paper said the Yemeni government launched a wide search, even dispatching helicopters. Her body was found Thursday, it said. Embassy officials said the case was still under investigation. The officials said the woman's family had been notified. They spoke on condition their names not be used. The officials would not give her name or other details but said they did not suspect foul play. Yemen is drawing an increasing number of Europeans and other tourists looking for exotic and remote holiday destinations.

### Fire set but fizzles at Cyprus radio station

NICOSIA (AP) — Arsonists tried to set fire to Radio Astra, the station of the Cyprus Communist Party Akel during the night, police reported Sunday. Astra director Takis Hajigeorgiou said petrol was poured under doors on two different floors and set on fire in the pre-dawn hours when the station was closed. The fire was extinguished before it could spread after the local fire brigade was alerted by automatic alarms. Mr Hajigeorgiou said. The cables of satellite receiver dishes on the roof of the building were also cut, he added. A police statement said total damage was about 200 Cyprus pounds (\$440). Mr Hajigeorgiou said Astra and its advertisers have gotten repeated anonymous threats since the station was taken over by Akel two years ago. He and Akel Secretary-General Dimitris Christofias said the incident could be related to the campaign for presidential elections next February.

### Hoax forces Air India plane to land in Oman

MUSCAT (AFP) — A bomb hoax forced an Air India flight from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to land in Oman and evacuate its passengers early Sunday, the company said here. The plane, which was flying from Dubai to the southern Indian city of Trivandrum, landed at 1:50 a.m. (10:50 GMT) in Muscat after Air India's office in Trivandrum received an anonymous phone call claiming a bomb was on board. Muscat airport's security forces evacuated the aircraft's 91 passengers and searched luggage but no bomb was found and the plane took off again at 6:20 a.m. (03:20 GMT).

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### PROGRAMME TWO

14:08 .....Tine Muppet Show  
14:30 .....Cartoon — Captain Planet  
15:00 .....French Programmes  
16:00 .....Nature's Inventions  
16:30 .....Deep Water Haven  
17:00 .....News Flash  
17:02 .....Doc. — Extra Dimensions  
18:00 .....French Programmes  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 Comedy — Roseanne  
20:00 Doc. — Discover Magazine  
20:30 Drama — Murder She Wrote  
21:10 .....Extreme  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:25 .....Under Suspicion  
23:00 Police Drama — Hunter  
23:59 Comedy — Dad's Army

### PRAYER TIMES

04:41 .....Fajr  
05:58 .....(Sunrise) Doha  
11:48 .....Dhuhr  
15:05 .....Asr  
15:37 .....Maghrib  
18:54 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

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Church of Nazarene Tel.  
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The Evangelical Local Church  
in Amman Tel. 811295.

English-speaking  
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.  
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### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Depart-

ment of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to drop

significantly with skies cloudy to

partly cloudy. Rainfall is also

expected in all parts of the King-

dom and winds becoming westerly

moderate to active. In Aqaba,

thunder showers are expected,

winds northerly moderate and seas

calm.

Min./Max. temp.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Amman .....07/13  
Aqaba .....13/21  
Deserts .....05/15  
Jordan Valley .....11/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:  
Amman 19, Aqaba 26 Humidity  
readings: Amman 32 per cent.  
Aqaba 31 per cent.

### USEFUL

### TELEPHONE

### NUMBERS

### NIGHT DUTY

### AMMAN:

Dr. Abbas Al Hakim .....885446

Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab 602507

Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb 875748

Dr. Jamal Jbarah .....847351

Ferdows pharmacy .....778336

Al Asema pharmacy .....637055

Nairoukh pharmacy .....637660

Al Salam pharmacy .....636730

Yacoub pharmacy .....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy .....636381

Nairoukh pharmacy .....642362

Najib pharmacy .....847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu .....281484

Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Ya'coub Khatib .....991772

Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111

Civil Defence Department .....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341

Civil Defence Emergency .....199

Rescue Police .....192 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade .....617101

Blood Bank .....775121

Highway Police .....843402

Traffic Police .....896390

Public Security Dept. ....630321

Hotel Complaints .....605800

Price Complaints .....661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints .....897497

Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121

Overseas Calls .....010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs .....623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs .....661101

Jordan Television .....773111

Radio Jordan .....774111

Water Authority .....680100

J. Electricity Authority .....815615

Electric Power Co. ....636381

RJ Flight Information .....08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITAL

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre .....813813/32

Khalidi Maternity .....644281/6

Akileh Maternity .....642412/2

Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362

Malhas, J. Amman .....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071

Shmeisani Hospital .....669131

University Hospital .....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital .....667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali .....666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/66

Italian, Al-Muhajreen .....777101/3

Al-Bashir .....775111/26

Army, Marka .....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital .....602240/50

Amal Hospital .....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery .....865199

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital

(09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital .....(09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

(09)990990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

(02)272775

Ibn Al Nafes Hospital

(02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital

(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

INTERNATIONAL

AIRPORT

This information is supplied by

Royal Jordanian (RJ) informa-

Alia International Airport Tel.

(08)53200-5, where it should

always be verified.

Information on other flights

are supplied on phone 08

(52700)

### ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights

07:15 .....Sanaa (RJ)

08:35 .....Jeddah (RJ)

08



## ABJ sponsors training course for PNA group

AMMAN (J.T.) — President of the Audit Bureau (ABJ) Abed Kharabsheh sponsored a joint training course at the ABJ training centre, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), for a group of Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Ministry of Finance and General Auditing Institution employees, an ABJ statement Sunday said.

The course was designed to provide a conceptual framework and suggest techniques for conducting audits in various sectors. Participants learned methodologies for planning and executing audits for a variety of economic sectors, the statement said.

Classroom training was supplemented by on-site

work at selected regional ABJ offices.

One of the course's stated goals was to train participants to identify practical techniques of auditing revenues and expenditures and to propose practical recommendations for improvements, according to the statement.

Participants also learned how to audit capital and development projects.

In concluding remarks, Dr. Kharabsheh stressed the importance of continued cooperation between regional and international organisations.

Human resources are the main element of development, he said, and, therefore, attention should be paid to training employees and instilling ethical values.

## Students participate in environmental contest

By Nadia Mukhlis  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Environmental awareness and methods of combating pollution were the main themes of a seminar/workshop held last Wednesday at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC).

The Friends of Environment Society (FOE) organised the annual event for high school students in the Kingdom to join together and submit projects in a competition covering environmental issues in Jordan. The students were between 14-16 years of age and hailed from government, private and military schools. The first competition was held in 1994 concentrating on existing environmental problems that the Kingdom faces.

This year, 155 different schools participated in the event, according to Head of Public and Financial Relations for FOE Rana Muhtasib.

Students have been working on their assorted entries since the beginning of the scholastic year, emphasising different environmental problems facing society today, she affirmed.

Ms. Muhtasib described students as discussing current environmental dilemmas such as air, soil, water and agricultural pollution along with environmental problems incurred by refineries and factories.

All projects were intensively studied and the students offered impressive suggestions [for the amelioration of environmental woes], she said.

The children's competition continues throughout the year, Director of the Media Committee Rana Naber said.

"Some written projects were combined with videotapes and even samples, like water or soil, have been taken to labs and tested," Ms. Naber said.

"Some students studying water pollution went to wastewater treatment plants," she affirmed.

The morning seminar involved a lecture given by an environmental specialist, while, during the afternoon, workshops opened in

which students were divided into three main groups, water, air and soil, with specialists from the society to help them with questions they had.

Each project is worked on by a group of two to seven students, Ms. Naber said.

The FOE technical committee will examine and analyse each project according to predetermined scientific and economic guidelines, Ms. Naber said.

In May, eight winning schools will be announced and given prizes such as encyclopaedias, books and videos, she confirmed.

The Ministry of the Environment in Venice, Italy visited the Kingdom three months ago and offered a scholarship to 15 Jordanian students, three supervisors and two environmental specialists to visit Venice for two weeks as a means of exchanging cultural and environmental awareness between the two countries.

According to FOE officials, the society is committed to nurturing the private sector's need to protect the environment and their efforts include the administration of the annual student competition funded by private sector contributions.

The FOE's main stated goal is to increase the environmental awareness of the younger generations.

The society is an independent, non-governmental, non-profit organisation, whose founders are citizens interested in carrying out environmental community-based development projects.

It was formed in 1994 and officially registered in 1995 and its main objectives are encouraging creativity and innovation, utilising natural energy like wind, water and sun, providing training for younger generations, enhancing the spirit of teamwork, creating environmental awareness, preserving and protecting the environment, encouraging participation of local firms and businesses and co-operating with other environmental societies to influence decision-makers to preserve the vast natural resources in Jordan.

## Court of Cassation ratifies execution

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Court of Cassation Sunday ratified a Criminal Court decision to execute a 26 year-old man for the murder of another in the Baqaa Refugee Camp in December of 1994.

Montasser Rajab Abu Zeid was sentenced to death by the Criminal Court on Nov. 23 of last year after being declared guilty of the premeditated murder of Anwar Ahmad Hassan in a cemetery in the Baqaa Refugee Camp on Dec. 3, 1994.

According to court transcripts, Mr. Abu Zeid heard from friends that the victim was engaged in an extra-marital affair with his mother-in-law.

"The defendant began to monitor Mr. Hassan and his mother-in-law, and after seeing them together several times he resolved to kill the man," the court said.

On Dec. 3, 1994, the court said, Mr. Abu Zeid lured Mr. Hassan to a cemetery in Baqaa Refugee Camp at 9:00 p.m. claiming that he wanted to talk with him about an important matter.

He then drew a gun he had purchased two weeks prior to the incident and shot the victim twice in the

back of his head.

"Subsequently, Mr. Abu Zeid shot Mr. Hassan a third time while the latter was falling to make sure that he died," the court said. "He then fled the scene."

The following day, the court added, Mr. Abu Zeid went to the victim's family and offered his condolences. The family of the victim then offered a financial reward to anyone who could lead the authorities to their son's killer.

Eight months later, court papers said, Mr. Abu Zeid informed his friend Ahmad Qaraqish that he killed Mr. Hassan and asked him not to disclose the matter to anyone.

Mr. Qaraqish duly informed authorities and Mr. Hassan's family of what he had learned, the court said, adding that Mr. Abu Zeid was immediately apprehended by police and confessed the same night.

In his confession, Mr. Abu Zeid reportedly told police that he did not regret what he did and that he killed Mr. Hassan to cleanse his family's and mother-in-law's honour.

The court maintained that its ruling was based on Mr. Abu Zeid's confession to the authorities and the weapon seized in the possession of one of Mr. Abu

Zeid's friends, which, it said, was the same used to kill Mr. Hassan.

In December 1996, the human rights organisation, Amnesty International (AI), quoted Mr. Abu Zeid as stating that he and his wife were tortured while in detention.

The organisation further stated that during his trial, Mr. Abu Zeid reported the alleged tortures, "but the court did not order an investigation into these allegations."

His wife, who is not a suspect in the case, was released from police custody, the AI statement added.

Amnesty International called for a full investigation into the alleged torture, stating "Mr. Abu Zeid's conviction was reportedly based on a confession made after he and his wife were tortured in pre-trial detention."

The verdict will be transferred to the chief attorney general, the Ministry of Justice, the prime minister and finally His Majesty King Hussein for endorsement.

In 1996, 10 people were executed in the Kingdom for various crimes.

## JPA council suspends weekly tabloid editor for four months

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Recent protestations against weekly tabloids were the justification the Jordan Press Association (JPA) council Sunday gave for suspending Editor of Al Urdun Musa Kilani from his post for four months.

JPA Director Fakhr Abu Hamda said the JPA disciplinary council based its decision on a news item published in the Jan. 6 issue of the newspaper "which tarnished the reputation of two journalists at the JPA union."

The news item entitled "A reporter and a prostitute" accused the sister of two journalists, Yousef Gheishan, the editor of the satiric weekly Abed Rabbo and his brother Nabil, a reporter at the Arabic Daily Al Aswaq, of running a brothel in Madaba.

The two journalists filed a complaint to the JPA disciplinary council in protest.

"This news item is inaccurate, lacks objectivity and honesty in reporting and tarnishes the reputation of two JPA members," Mr. Abu Hamda said.

In January 1997, the JPA

Council issued a statement expressing its dismay over the performance of some weekly newspapers, stating that these tabloids were abusing press freedoms and tarnishing the culture, values and traditions of society.

The union threatened tough sanctions against journalists who do not abide by press ethics, stressing that violators will be referred to the union disciplinary council, possibly resulting in their permanent expulsion from the union.

Mr. Abu Hamda added that Dr. Kilani was entitled to appeal if he wishes.

"We heard several witnesses including Dr. Kilani himself, who admitted that the news item published in his newspaper was inaccurate," he said.

Dr. Kilani was not available Sunday to comment on the JPA disciplinary council decision.

But a close relative of Dr. Kilani informed the Jordan Times that he is intending to appeal the JPA decision to the Higher Court of Justice.

Journalist Nabil Gheishan told the Jordan Times Sunday that he and his brother decided to file a complaint

at the union "for ethical and not personal motives."

"His newspapers made false and scandalous accusations against our sister and, although Dr. Kilani settled the matter in accordance with tribal customs, we will not give up our professional rights," he said.

Mr. Gheishan charged that Dr. Kilani published the news item in question in response to his brother Yousef Gheishan's publishing a caricature in Abed Rabbo, describing Dr. Kilani's brother, Islamist Deputy Ibrahim Zeid Kilani as a "hypocrite."

Deputy Kilani, along with Minister of Public Works Abdul Hadi Majali, whom Abed Rabbo accused of stealing cars, filed a lawsuit in January against the newspaper and Yousef Gheishan.

Mr. Abu Hamda told the Jordan Times that the JPA has contacted the Press and Publications Department to undertake necessary legal measures to assign a substitute editor for the four-month period.

"If Dr. Kilani does not abide by the union's decision, progressive fines will be imposed against him," Mr. Abu Hamda said.

## VTC training workshop focuses on role of women

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education Munther Masi Sunday opened a three-day regional youth training workshop by issuing a call to encourage young women to acquire vocational and technical training.

The workshop was organised by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).

The Ministry of Education has expanded vocational training programmes in the schools and nearly 41 per cent of male students and 22 per cent of female students are currently enrolled in vocational training courses, Dr. Masi said.

In the course of implementing the 1987 national educational conference's recommendations, the ministry has modified textbooks, academic and vocational training programmes, school buildings and expanded technical training programmes, the minister added.

Director General of the Vocational Training Corporation (VTC) Ali Nasrallah informed the meeting that focus is being given to factory demands for skilled human resources.

The workshop and subsequent round table meeting, Mr. Nasrallah stated, will address a number of issues pertaining to vocational and technical training.

ing, vocational course frameworks, the preparation of programmes for vocational centres, encouragement of young women to acquire vocational and technical training and guiding students towards vocational education.

UNESCO Representative Suleiman Awad Suleiman maintained that unemployment is widespread among youths in the Arab World with adverse social and economic consequences.

He added that recent statistics have demonstrated an increase in students dropping out of academic and vocational centres with a serious parallel effect on general development.

Mr. Suleiman maintained that the workshop and round table meeting will focus on difficulties and problems specific to the young as well as a UNESCO project to attract youth towards vocational and technical training.

The U.N. organisation is spending nearly \$1 million of its 1996-1997 budget for the implementation of this project in cooperation with various Arab states, he affirmed, and the project is currently being implemented in Jordan, Tunisia, Bahrain and Lebanon in order to better encourage young women to enter technical training programmes.

## RCC to host music events

AMMAN (J.T.) — Under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor, three musical events are scheduled to be held this week.

Today the Conference of the Fourteenth Arab Academy of Music and the Second Arab Music Rostrom will be held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC).

The conference has been organised by the National Music Conservatory (NMC/ Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF), Ministry of Culture and the International Music Council.

The NMC/ NHF is also convening on Mar. 4 at 3 p.m. to discuss music patterns and performing styles in the Arab World at the RCC conference hall in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and the Arab Academy of Music.

The Second Arab Music Rostrom, "Rhythms of Arab Music," will be held at the RCC Conference Hall on Mar. 5 at 11 a.m.

This programme has been developed in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, the Arab Academy of Music and the UNESCO International Music Council.

## Local tourist enterprise wins global environment award

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A local tourism enterprise was selected last weekend as the most environmentally friendly hotel in the world by an international airline.

Taybet Zaman Village and Hotel Resort was awarded British Airways' (BA) annual Tourism for Tomorrow Global Award, granted each year by BA for achievements in cultural heritage and environmental preservation, and in limiting pollution, controlling waste and minimising detrimental environmental impact resulting from tourism.

"Some people recycle paper and bottles," said Dr. David Bellamy, a prominent British environmental and conservation expert, and chair of the judging panel. "In Jordan, they've managed to recycle a whole village."

"It's good for the visitors, the local community and the environment, that's why we felt that this project deserved to win."

Taybet Zaman was one of 100 entries from around the world, judged by representatives from international organisations such as the World Travel and Tourism Council, the World Conservation Union, the American Society of Travel Agents, the Smithsonian Institution, the New York Times, the British Tourist Authority and the Sunday Times.

In winning the global award, the institution was consequently recognised as the most environmentally friendly resort in the Middle East and Africa, ahead of entries from Egypt and

South Africa.

The Taybet Zaman Hotel and Resort project, owned by Jordan Tourism Investments, is a renovated 19th century village, 10 kilometres south of Petra. Prior to its renovation and reopening in 1994, Taybet Zaman was a "semi-derelict" village representing one of the last vestiges of vernacular typical to Jordan's rural southern regions.

The principle of the village's resurrection was to preserve a part of Jordanian heritage for the benefit of a small, local community, while simultaneously offering tourists insight to local historic culture without being intrusive, says JTI managing director Yazid Abu Jaber.

Former homes of the village are now 108 guest rooms which are accompanied on the Taybet Zaman premises by several crafts and spice stores, restaurants, bars, and one of its most popular attractions, an authentic Turkish bath.

Management of the establishment has trained staff to incorporate water and energy conservation into the daily operation of the facility, and uses recycled material for all public relations and publicity materials when possible, he said.

"Another principle or philosophy that we have is that 'these are things that should be done at home'," he said. "We hope that our employees 'export' this knowledge to the rest of Taybet."

"[Sound environmental practices] cannot be imposed," he said. "We would like to think that the best way to promote environmental sustainability is to convince people that it is

the best way by setting an example."

Recipients of the award are also judged on their contribution to sustainable tourism, described by BA as "development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

JTI argues that it has contributed to sustainable tourism development not only through its environmental efforts but through its endeavours to provide employment opportunities to the local community.

According to Mr. Abu Jaber, of approximately 200 employees at the village, nearly three quarters are from the village of Taybet, and 99 per cent of the employees are from Jordan.

"The employment issue was one of our agreed priorities from the very beginning," he said. "We want to see the facility run entirely by people from the area, but for reasons such as training, etc., this will take some time."

"But in order to promote Jordanian culture and Jordanian hospitality, it has to be done by Jordanians all the way."

Taybet Zaman will be introduced to international travellers next month in BA's in flight magazine "Highlights" and received coverage in the last edition in the Sunday Times for its achievement.

The Tourism for Tomorrow prize was presented to Mr. Ali Ghandour, chairman of JTI board of directors, at an awards ceremony in London last Friday.

## Muta University plans establishment of environmental impact centre

By Sacha Baggili  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Plans for the establishment of an Environmental Impact Assessment Centre (EIAC) to monitor pollution and develop the quality of environmental research in Jordan and the region are under way at Muta University.

According to Muta University Vice President for Academic Affairs Abdul Rahim Hunaiti, the project, which has received an encouraging response from the Ministry of Planning, will involve financing from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Jordan and will be established in cooperation with Carlton University in Canada.

Concerning the relevance of the proposed location of the EIAC in the south of the country, Dr. Hunaiti told the Jordan Times that the presence of potash, cement and concrete factories in the area accentuates the need to expand environmental research in the Kingdom.

In addition, he said that the centre will focus on topics related to the misuse of chemicals in agriculture, desertification research and arboreal issues.

"Our Department of Agriculture maintains close ties with the agricultural community in Jordan, and the EIAC will enhance these ties," Dr. Hunaiti asserted.

Dr. Hunaiti last week, received a Canadian delegation headed by Canadian Ambassador to Jordan Michael Malloy.

According to Dr. Hunaiti, during the visit it was decided that two delegations from the EIAC at Carlton University should visit Muta in the next two months to further scrutinise details concerning the centre's establishment.

It is estimated that the project for an EIAC at Muta University will cost around JD1 million.

"We will not be constructing any new buildings to accommodate the new centre. Financial aid from Canada will enable us to develop our laboratory facilities and supply the equipment necessary for it to serve its purpose," Dr. Hunaiti affirmed.

"As well as benefiting Jordan's environment and the Karak community there will be a direct benefit for undergraduates at Muta studying related subjects," he added.

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Dr. Hunaiti described the efforts exerted by the university to develop external relations and facilitate student and staff exchange programmes with universities

abroad.

He said that during discussions with the Canadian delegates on Wednesday, "agreements were reached for further collaboration between Muta University and institutions of higher education in Canada."

Last month, the university received a donation of cultural, archaeological and scientific periodicals to cover a period of five years from the German Research Institute and the Economic Communication Ministry in Germany.

The university also recently received a contribution of scientific equipment from the Alexander Von Humboldt Foundation as a result of connections made by Muta University's International Relations Advisor Marwan Musa.

"We have greatly benefited from our relations with German institutions and are delighted at benefits being reaped by our growing relationships with Canadian universities," said Dr. Hunaiti.

He added that such external relations have begun to alleviate dilemmas pertaining to the university's sense of relative isolation in southern Jordan.

## Authorities arrest operators of eight illicit telecommunications firms in Kingdom

AMMAN (J.T.) — Authorities have arrested the owners/operators of eight telecommunications companies illegally conducting business in the Kingdom, according to a Department for Combating Corruption statement Sunday.

The businesses set up telecommunications stations in several private homes with connections to Israeli telecommunications firms. They then used mobile telephone equip-

ment fitted with special aerials to make telephone connections abroad, the statement affirmed.

It said that these "pirate stations," as they are called by the authorities, have been causing great financial losses to the Jordanian Telecommunications Company (JTC) by offering customers lower call rates.

The department said that the station equipment was smuggled into Jordan. The use of such equipment is

banned in Jordan without official government approval.

In January Minister of Post and Communications Jamal Saraireh, in an interview with the Jordan Times, warned private sector companies against unlawful provision of telecommunications services. He noted that security forces had shut down several such operations and arrested the perpetrators.

## What's Going On

### LECTURES

- \* "The Arab Presence in Spanish Literature" by Rifaat Ateef at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- \* "Why have the Arabs Been Defeated? Any Outlet?" by Dr. Burhan Al Danjani at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.
- \* "Dracula: the eternal appeal of the undead" by Dr. Noha Hommad and Mrs. Anna Obeidat at the British Council at 6:00 p.m.

### CONCERT

- \* Performance by National Music Conservatory, directed by Rida Murtada, at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.



## Demonstrators pillage, torch Albanian president's residence

TIRANA (AFP) — Demonstrators Sunday pillaged and set fire to the official residence of Albanian President Sali Berisha in the southern port of Vlore, witnesses said.

The demonstrators burst into the villa, situated in the highest part of the city, and seized paintings and furniture before setting fire to the building, the witnesses contacted by telephone said.

The villa, which has a view out to sea, dates back to the era of Communist dictator Enver Hoxha.

Protestors also set fire to a subsidiary of Albania's savings bank and a shop in the city centre.

Daily anti-government protests began on Feb. 5 in Vlore following the collapse of Pyramid investment schemes, and they have increasingly degenerated into violence.

Albanian protesters kept up the pressure on the authorities Sunday, staging new anti-government demonstrations at the southern port city of Vlore after overnight violence at two other towns in the region.

The seven-party opposition coalition Democratic Forum called for a new rally in Tirana's Skanderbeg square, due to start at midday (1100 GMT) despite a police ban on demonstrations there.

At Vlore, where nine people died in rioting Saturday, scores of armed men drove through the town, sounding their horns and firing shots into the air, despite an announcement late Saturday that the government had resigned.

The protesters were unimpressed by the televised statement by President Sali Berisha that Prime Minister



An injured protester with bleeding face wounds receives assistance after violent clashes in the Albanian capital Tirana Saturday (Reuters photo)

Aleksander Meksi and his government were to go and that a new team would be approved by parliament, dominated by the ruling Democratic Party.

A spokesman for a group of around 40 students on hunger strike at Vlore University said they were not satisfied with the latest measures.

"We reject the idea of a new Democratic Party government," the spokesman said. "We want all our claims to be accepted."

The students are demand-

ing the formation of transitional government of experts and reimbursement for hundreds of thousands of investors ruined by the collapse of pyramid investment schemes.

Democratic Forum denounced Berisha's "demagoguery" and dismissed his announcement as "an attempt to deceive the people once again."

The opposition has been demanding the formation of an interim government that would prepare "early free and honest elections," Mr. Berisha, who has

refused to envisage coalition arrangements that would involve the Socialist (ex-Communist) Party, the leading component of Democratic Forum, said he was calling a round table involving the authorities and opposition leaders Sunday. By midday Democratic Forum had still not replied to the proposal.

Vlore has been abandoned by the Albanian police for the past three weeks. Saturday's rioting erupted after thousands of people stormed an army barracks, seized weapons and clashed with the SHIK secret police Friday.

Meanwhile protesters attacked and torched public buildings in two southern Albanian towns overnight, residents said by telephone Sunday.

About 1,000 people ran riot in Sarande, on the Adriatic Coast around 300 kilometres southwest of Tirana, torching police and court buildings, while at Himara, between Sarande and Vlore, rioters torched the town hall and the police station, residents in the towns said. Police did not intervene during the rioting at Sarande and no injuries were reported.

The disturbances began in the late evening when a group of men gathered in the town square, firing weapons into the air. They attacked police administrative offices and, meeting no resistance, looted weapons and set fire to the building. They then set fire to a shop in the town centre and moved on to the port area where they ransacked several buildings. Some 200 prison inmates took advantage of the unrest and broke out of a local prison.



Three unidentified people lay dead in a hospital in the southern Albanian port town of Vlore as a member of hospital staff looks on Saturday. Nine people were reported to have been killed after a bloody night-time exchange of gunfire between protesters and secret police (Reuters photo)

## Indonesian army chief backs ruling party

JAKARTA (AFP) — Indonesia's armed forces chief has lent the military's backing to the ruling Golkar Party ahead of May polls, breaking decades of traditional neutrality, the state news agency reported Sunday.

General Feisal Tanjung said here Saturday before the May 29 general elections that "the big ABRI (armed forces) family" channels its "political aspirations" to Golkar.

Gen. Tanjung's statement, made at a leadership meeting of the United Development Party (PPP), was in response to PPP members' questions about the military's closeness to Golkar.

Under Indonesian law, the armed forces must remain neutral in politics and not side with any political party.

To guarantee these members of the armed forces do not vote, and 75 military representatives are picked by presidential appointment to the 425-seat parliament.

Golkar, the party of Indonesian President Suharto, has won every election since 1971.

Last year, army chief General Raden Hartono was publicly criticised when he maintained for the first time that the army and soldiers' families must throw their support behind Golkar.

In January Defence Minister Edi Sudrajat, a retired army general, warned the military to remain independent and not to take sides.

Gen. Tanjung said Saturday that groups related to the armed forces such as organizations for veterans, soldiers' wives and children, and military-affiliated youths, were also supporters of Golkar.

Meanwhile, Gen. Tanjung said the military must crack down on dissent to protect the nation's unity.

The armed forces "cannot sacrifice the nation's very important integrity and stability only to be tolerant towards concepts and actions which cannot be measured," he told the PPP.

He added that the military resorted to "limited repression" to maintain national stability.

Its tough line was a "preventive" measure against "destructive forces," he said, adding that democracy was "not everything," especially if it has "counterproductive" and "anarchic" forms. He also dismissed PPP complaints that the rules for the electoral procedures were too restrictive, after the party agreed some of its chapters could boycott the election campaign.

## AIDS cases, deaths drop in France

PARIS (R) — The number of AIDS cases and deaths in France fell in 1996 for the first time since the start of the epidemic, tracking a trend in the United States, health officials said Saturday.

A health ministry statement said 2,285 people died of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) last year, a decline of about 25 per cent from 1995.

The number of new cases also fell sharply, tumbling to about 1,000 during the second half of 1996 compared to 1,228 during the

first six months, said the statement. Health officials attributed the decline to improved drugs and preventive programmes.

U.S. Health officials this week reported a similar trend. AIDS deaths in the United States fell by 13 per cent during the first half of 1996, said the Federal Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

France's cabinet secretary of state for health and social security, Herve Gaymard, warned that the risk of infection was still present.

"These good results must not allow U.S. to forget the need to be careful...and to continue all necessary prevention efforts," Mr. Gaymard said.

The disease was first detected in the United States in 1981.

The French government said last month that France was the European nation hardest hit by the epidemic, with 50,000 reported cases, 30,000 deaths and 110,000 people who had tested positive for AIDS virus infection.

## Rebels vow to fight on unless Burmese junta resumes talks

BANGKOK (AFP) — The Karen National Union (KNU) vowed Sunday to battle on against a massive Burmese military offensive which has displaced thousands of civilians unless the ruling junta resumes peace talks.

"The fighting shall continue, unless the SLORC can be brought back to the negotiating table," the supreme command of the KNU announced in a statement received here from the Thai border.

SLORC, or the State Law and Order Restoration Council is the official name of the Burma junta, has reached ceasefire agreements with all major Burmese insurgencies except the rebel KNU.

The rebel statement said more than 20,000 refugees had escaped to Thailand since the attack on Karen-held territories in eastern and southern Burma by junta forces began on Feb. 10.

The junta's offensive began only four days after a SLORC "pre-negotiating team" had offered a list of suggestions about how further peace talks could take place, it said.

"Many thousands" of Karen and Burmese displaced people remain trapped inside Burma as SLORC troops have attempted to cut off access to the border, the statement said.

"These people are in grave danger, and many families have been separated causing much suffering to the refugees who survived the hazardous journey to the border," it said.

A relief worker at the Thai border estimated that more than 8,000 Karen civilians could be trapped inside the KNU's Fourth Brigade area.

in the Tenasserim division of southern Burma.

Many were believed to have been on the move from their homes in Tenasserim division for the past two weeks and could have been stopped in their tracks by rapid troop manoeuvres by the SLORC, border sources said.

The KNU, which has been battling for greater political autonomy for almost 50 years, expressed concern about the "precarious" security of refugee camps housing some 90,000 Karens in Thailand, which it said were under threat of attack from the "SLORC army and its followers."

It charged that civilian refugees have "recently been repatriated into war zones" — a reference to hundreds of Karen women and children reportedly pushed back into Burma this week by the Thai military.

Despite the KNU's call for talks to resume, there appeared little prospect of the SLORC holding off in its offensive which has swept through the rebel enclaves in its fourth and Sixth Brigade areas.

One analyst said the Karens had already lost control of Sixth Brigade area, although it still had hideouts in densely forested areas, and would lose remaining territories in Fourth Brigade area opposite Thailand's Ratchaburi province within two weeks.

The KNU said in its statement that it had held four rounds of negotiations with SLORC between December 1995 and November 1996 and had requested a fifth round of talks.

"Throughout the duration of these talks, the KNU was determined to resolve the existing political problems

through political dialogue. But political dialogue was not on SLORC's agenda," the rebel statement said.

Fifteen ethnic insurgencies have reached terms with the SLORC since 1989 through a combination of military pressure and promised economic assistance.

The KNU came to the negotiating table after it lost its stronghold at Manerplaw in early 1995, when a Karen splinter group led SLORC forces into the rebel's base.

But the KNU maintains that giving up armed struggle and entering the junta's legal fold is tantamount to surrender.

The Thai army dealt another big blow to the beleaguered KNU when it unearthed a cache of its weapons at the Thai-Burma border and confiscated them, officials said Sunday. They told Reuters about 200 Thai soldiers made a surprise raid late Saturday at Htee Ho Koh near Mae-chon village on the north-western border with Burma and found the weapons.

Among weapons seized were 87 rocket launchers, 11 recoilless rifles, nine machine guns and 1,239 other rifles.

The assortment of arms, the Thai military's biggest seizure of its kind in recent years, was believed to have been hidden by KNU guerrillas fleeing the Burmese army offensive against them earlier this month, the officials said.

"We informed our Burmese counterparts that our operation was only meant to search for the weapons of the rebels and not to provoke or confront them," said Colonel Suwit Maenmuan, commander of the Thai task force which undertook the operation.

## CIA drops over 1,000 informants worldwide

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has dropped over 1,000 secret informants after determining that many of them, especially in Latin America, were involved in human rights abuses, the Washington Post reported Sunday.

Quoting unnamed sources, the Post said that while the CIA dropped many of the informants because they were deadwood, "a disproportionately high number of informants dropped for (human rights) abuses were employed in Latin America during the 1980s and early 1990s, but some were employed in the Middle East and Asia."

The paper said that "the magnitude of the cuts sug-

gests the agency's clandestine service had a broader problem with informants than the CIA has publicly acknowledged."

When the "agent scrub" began two years ago, the number of discharged informants approached one-third of the total number of informants employed by the CIA.

Officials said the purge was prompted by a smaller review in 1994 of CIA informants in Latin America, which the Post said "started agency managers by turning up abundant evidence that the agency employed many foreigners implicated in human rights abuses."

That review was sparked by the CIA's discovery that

an informant in El Salvador "had human rights problems," a former official told the daily.

As a result the CIA's Latin America division in early 1995 began dropping informants, including some in Guatemala "credibly alleged to have ordered, planned, or participated" in abuses, according to a June 1996 report.

While only about 10 per cent of the informants overall were dropped because of human rights abuses, about 50 per cent of those in Latin America were let go for that reason.

Under a policy implemented by former CIA director John Deutch, CIA officers must now submit annual reports assessing the

quality of their informants and generally are prohibited from recruiting new sources implicated in human rights abuses or criminal behavior, the paper said.

The new policy has been controversial with some officers privately complaining to Republican politicians that they can no longer hire disreputable informants who may nevertheless have valuable information.

"Mother Teresa is not a helpful person if you want to find out about the Indian nuclear programme... and you don't get to the top of a narcotics cartel or a terrorist group because you have kept the books well," one source said.

## Oregon scientists cloned monkeys from embryos

WASHINGTON (R) — Scientists in Oregon have produced monkeys from cloned embryos, the first time a species that closely related to humans has been cloned, researchers told the Washington Post.

The paper reported in its Sunday edition that scientists had used a technique similar to the one Scottish researchers used to clone sheep — the first time an adult animal had been successfully cloned.

News of the Scottish cloning has caused a worldwide uproar, prompting some governments to promise thorough checks on scientists and bans on carbon-copy humans.

Experts said the cloning success in Oregon, which has not yet been announced or published in a scientific journal, adds to a growing body of evidence that there are no insurmountable biological barriers to creating human clones.

The two monkeys, born in August, were cloned from cells taken from embryos — not an adult animal, like the sheep Dolly. The cloned primates are not genetically identical to any adult monkey, the newspaper reported, quoting interviews with the researchers.

Lead researcher Don Wolf, a senior scientist at the Oregon Regional Primate Research Centre in

Beaverton, and director of the Human In Vitro Fertilisation Laboratory at Oregon Health Services University in Portland, told the paper researchers do not plan to produce clones from adult monkeys.

"This is really an effort to see if we can create genetically identical monkeys for research," he told the paper.

Far fewer of these carbon-copy animals would be needed for drug experiments because their sameness would eliminate much of the genetic variability that confounds such experiments, he said.

The two monkeys are not identical to each other because they were cloned

from different embryos, but researchers said the technique could be used to create eight or more identical monkeys from a single embryo.

The same technique has already been used to clone embryos in other species. Scottish researcher Ian Wilmut and his colleagues who created Dolly also used the technique last year to clone sheep embryos, an intermediate step to their successful cloning of Dolly from an adult.

Further advances could lead to the ability to make clones of adult monkeys as well, researchers told the Post.

## Death toll put at seven in China bomb blasts

BEIJING (R) — The death toll from three time-bombs detonated on buses in China's far west region of Xinjiang last week was seven, with more than 60 wounded, a local government official said on Sunday.

Earlier, residents and officials had said four people died in Tuesday's blasts in the Xinjiang capital of Urumqi. It was not known if the later figure counted people who were killed on the spot or who had died as a result of their injuries.

The official, a member of the Muslim-dominated region's ethnic Uighur popu-

lation, said most of the dead were students.

The blasts, the latest example of brewing unrest in the oil-rich region bordering central Asia, coincided with funeral rites in Beijing for political patriarch Deng Xiaoping, a time when Chinese leaders sought to present an image of stability.

The Uighur official said Xinjiang authorities had not decided whether to treat the bombings as a criminal or political case.

He said authorities were reluctant to label the attacks as politically-motivated for

fear of aggravating ethnic tensions in the region, where Muslim separatists want to set up an independent "East Turkestan."

But the Hong Kong newspaper Ming Pao quoted Wang Lequan, the Xinjiang Communist Party Secretary, as calling the Urumqi bus attacks "typical terrorist activity."

The newspaper said Mr. Wang denied the attacks were directly linked to separatist groups or to anti-Chinese riots in the Xinjiang town of Yining earlier in February.

"These terrorists are just terrorists. They have no

other special background," he was quoted as saying.

He said key perpetrators of both the Urumqi and the Yining incidents had been caught, and indicated he believed they should be put to death.

"They have fought, smashed things, stolen things, burnt things and killed people. They should be severely punished," Ming Pao quoted him as saying.

On the same days as the Urumqi attacks the Xinjiang daily published a long article that included a section on ethnic separatism and "illegal religious activities."

كندا من لندن



## Sri Lanka heads for elections amid violence

COLOMBO (AFP) — Political violence has escalated in Sri Lanka despite a crackdown on illegal guns ahead of a crucial mid-term test for President Chandrika Kumaratunga's administration, police said Sunday.

Supporters of Mrs. Kumaratunga's People's Alliance (PA) and the main opposition United National Party (UNP) have been attacking each other and sometimes fighting among themselves, police said. Nearly 500 complaints of polls-related violence were received since nominations for the March 21 local council election closed just under three weeks ago, a police spokesman said.

"So far the big incidents are arson, destruction of property and physical violence," a police spokesman said. "The main incident was the double murder of a government MP and a bodyguard."

The killing three weeks ago of ruling party legislator Nalanda Ellawela and a police guard by gunmen alleged to be opposition UNP politicians has fuelled politically motivated attacks across the country, officials said.

UNP's General Secretary Gamini Athukorale escaped an assassination attempt Thursday and he quickly blamed ruling party politicians for shooting at him.

The government responded the next day by announcing that opposition UNP men were plotting to kill one of its legislators. The UNP released photographs of one of its local council candidates who had been beaten, stripped naked and tied to a lamp post allegedly by thugs of a ruling party law maker.

At stake on March 21 are more than the 238 local councils and analysts said the vote was also a referendum on Mrs. Kumaratunga's two and half year rule and her proposed political reforms.

A senior minister said that a good showing by the government will help them to push ahead Mrs. Kumaratunga's radical plan to share power with minority Tamils in an attempt to end the separatist war which has killed more than 50,000 people since it began in the 1970s.

The PA came to power promising peace and scale down privatisation of utilities but is blamed by rivals for the country's sluggish economy, the continuing Tamil separatist war and labour unrest.

Analysts say the killing of PA legislator Mr. Ellawela, allegedly by UNP gunmen, turned the tables in favour of the ruling party, but it was difficult to predict if the sympathy wave would last until the elections.

Opposition leader Ranil Wickremesinghe, the UNP chief, tried to stem the wave of public anger against his party by suspending two of his members implicated in the Mr. Ellawela murder.

Mr. Wickremesinghe, a former prime minister, called for the decommissioning of weapons held by all politicians and described the forthcoming local poll as the "most violent" since independence in 1948.

"Taking the guns of UNP supporters alone will not be useful," Mr. Wickremesinghe said. "All the weapons given to politicians, including those in the government, must be withdrawn."

Justice Minister G. L. Peiris said violence entered politics because of a large number of weapons in the hands of politicians. "This is a distressing social problem," Mr. Peiris said.



Romania's exiled King Michael (left) and Orthodox Patriarch Teoctist (right) are greeted by people at the end of an Orthodox religious service in Bucharest Sunday. King Michael, 75, arrived in his homeland for a five-day visit, a week after the new centrist government restored his citizenship (Reuters photo)

## Small crowds greet Romanian king

BUCHAREST (R) — Romania's exiled King Michael was hailed by the head of the Orthodox Church Sunday as a son of the nation, but only small crowds turned out for a service in a homecoming no longer generating passion among Romanians.

King Michael, forced to abdicate by pro-Moscow Communists in 1947, is making his second trip back to his homeland after the new centrist government restored his citizenship last week and he agreed to abide by the 1991 republican constitution.

Patriarch Teoctist said the king had seen his church survive five decades of repression, the bulldozing of churches by dictator Nicolae Ceausescu and a 1987 attempt to pull down its headquarters, the 18th century church of the patriarchate.

"You are the son of our church and of our nation," the white-clad patriarch told

King Michael, seated in a gilded throne in the church spared from Ceausescu's destruction of one-fifth of central Bucharest to make way for a vast palace.

"God gave us strength to resist those chilling moments in 1987. We no longer have exiles. For us, for the church, we hope that you will gather our brothers in Europe around the Church."

Outside the church, a crowd of no more than 3,000 people greeted the king. Some waved banners depicting "greater Romania," including territories populated by ethnic Romanians and now part of Ukraine, Moldova and Bulgaria.

King Michael was greeted on Bucharest streets after his arrival Friday from exile in Switzerland by 20,000 well-wishers.

The authorities and many Romanians view the visit as yet another sign that the country is returning to normal after seven years of post-Communist uncertainty.

Opinion polls show a tiny fraction of Romanians, faced with plunging living standards in the transition to a market economy, favour restoration of the monarchy.

New centrist President Emil Constantinescu says the king's prestige could be put to use promoting Romania's foremost foreign policy goal — early admission to NATO alongside favourites Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

King Michael has expressed willingness to assume this role, but members of his retinue say he should be "champion" of Romanian interests rather than ambassador, "a term unfit for a king."

King Michael's five-day visit includes a visit Monday to royal tombs north-west of the capital and a dinner with Mr. Constantinescu Tuesday.

## Tornadoes kill 23 in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (R) — A series of tornadoes in southwestern Arkansas killed 23 people and injured hundreds more Saturday, Governor Mike Huckabee said.

Emergency services officials said hundreds of people were likely to be left homeless.

"It's a major disaster. That's the simplest way to put it," said Ray Briggler of the Arkansas Office of Emergency Services.

Mr. Briggler said he could not confirm the governor's death toll.

President Bill Clinton, in New York City to celebrate his daughter's birthday, spoke with Federal Emergency Management Agency director James Lee Witt Saturday night about the situation in his home state, according to White House spokesman David Johnson.

Mr. Clinton planned to remain in touch with Mr. Witt over the next few days.

"The president is quite concerned with the situation," Mr. Johnson said.

adding that Mr. Clinton first learned of the tornado as he arrived to attend the show "Chicago" in New York.

Mr. Witt could travel to Arkansas as early as Sunday to help coordinate relief for victims of the tornado, he added.

Several hospitals in south and central Arkansas reported treating scores of storm-related injuries, many of them serious.

Little Rock National Airport was closed to all air traffic Saturday afternoon when debris from the terminal roof was blown across runways.

A Continental Airlines passenger plane preparing to take off was struck by flying debris and the pilot returned the aircraft to the terminal area.

In some areas, electrical power and telephone service was lost when uprooted trees snapped utility lines. "It's a mess," said Sergeant George Craig of the Pulaski County Sheriff's Department.

Mr. Huckabee activated

units of the Arkansas National Guard to maintain order and assist in providing emergency services.

The hardest hit area appeared to be Arkadelphia, a small city about 80 kilometers southwest of Little Rock, where three fatalities occurred. Dozens of homes and some businesses were heavily damaged or destroyed.

Officials declared a curfew and said only emergency vehicles and property owners would be allowed to enter the city.

Two others were killed in adjoining Saline County and a sixth in Jackson County, about 240 kilometers to the northeast.

No dollar estimate on the damage was available.

"We're concerned about people right now, not money," said the governor's press secretary. "I expect the governor will be declaring at least three counties disaster areas later tonight."

The tornadoes were accompanied by extremely heavy rains and marble-sized hail.

## Cosmonauts return after Mir mission

MOSCOW (R) — Three cosmonauts returned to Earth Sunday after conducting a range of scientific experiments aboard Russia's orbiting Mir space station.

"Everything went according to plan. The landing capsule (from the Soyuz TM-24 spacecraft) came down on schedule at 0944 (0644 GMT)," a mission control spokesman told Reuters.

The three cosmonauts, Russians Valery Korzun and Alexander Kaleri and Germany's Reinhold Ewald, landed at a remote location some 130 kilometers east of the

Kazakh town of Dzhezkazgan.

ITAR-TASS news agency said the cosmonauts, "felt well" after their mission and would be flown later Sunday to a location just outside Moscow for routine post-flight medical tests.

The two Russians blasted off from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan last August and conducted more than 200 experiments in new scientific modules aboard Mir under programmes sponsored by the United States, France and Russia. Ewald spent 20 days in Mir.

## Zaire rebels claim victory at refugee site and town

GOMA, Zaire (R) — Zairean rebels advancing towards Kisangani said Sunday their forces had captured the strategic town of Lubutu and the Tingi Tingi camp that had held 170,000 Hutu refugees.

"Our forces took Tingi Tingi and Lubutu on Saturday. They are continuing to advance towards Kisangani," Mwenze Kongolo, justice minister in the rebels' administration, told Reuters by telephone.

There was no independent confirmation of the advance and no word on the fate of the refugees.

Lubutu, 200 kilometres southeast of Kisangani, is the last town on the road from Bukavu and boasts an airstrip.

Tens of thousands of refugees started Friday to leave Tingi Tingi, outside Lubutu, fleeing the advancing rebels, according to aid workers evacuated from Kisangani Saturday. Zaire rebel leader Laurent Kabila was expected to give details of the capture claim at a news conference at his headquarters in Goma later Sunday, aides said.

The rebel advance towards Kisangani, Zaire's third largest city, threatens the integrity of the vast and mineral-rich country, ruled since 1965 by President Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr. Mobutu, now in France ailing with prostate cancer, has decided to delay his return home for a few days to pursue his search for a solution to the crisis, an aide said Sunday.

The delay is unrelated to Mobutu's health, the aide added. His entourage earlier said he would return home at the weekend.

A total of 57 expatriate aid workers from the United Nations and other agencies left Kisangani and Tingi Tingi for the Zairean capital Kinshasa, saying insecurity linked to the rebel advance made their work impossible.

An estimated 170,000 Rwandan and Burundian refugees had set up a camp at Tingi Tingi after fleeing camps further east. Doctors said up to 40 a day were dying of hunger and disease.

The Tingi Tingi refugees are said to include members of the Interahamwe militia and former Rwandan government army held responsible for the 1994 Rwanda genocide of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and Hutu moderates.

The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, appealed Saturday to both sides in the conflict to spare refugees and grant access to aid agencies.

South African President Nelson Mandela met Mr. Kabila and an aide to Mr. Mobutu last week in an attempt to broker peace.

The rebels, who have captured a swath of territory in east Zaire around 1,000 kilometres long in the campaign which started last October, responded to a Jan. 20 counter-offensive by attacking on several fronts, throwing the notoriously ill-disciplined Zaire army on the defensive.

The rebels said they took Kindu, 400 kilometres south of Kisangani, Friday, a claim confirmed by independent sources but denied by the Zaire government.

The rebels have identified Kisangani as a target. The city is a gateway to east Zaire and the last navigable point on the Zaire River which flows southwest to Kinshasa.

A Zaire Defence Ministry statement read on state radio Saturday night took issue with the pullout by relief agencies.

"It is the representatives of U.N. organisations who are sowing panic and confusion amongst the population whether in Kisangani, Tingi Tingi, Amisi or Kindu, with their untimely move to evacuate personnel," said the statement signed by Defence Minister General Likulia Bolongo, listing other rebel targets.

"The ministry condemns this negative action which is contrary to their humanitarian mission," it added.

In Nice, France, an aide to Zairean President Mobutu said Sunday the Zairean president has decided to delay his return home for a few days to pursue from France his search for a solution to the crisis in his central African nation.

The delay in returning to Zaire is unrelated to Mr. Mobutu's health, the aide added. Mr. Mobutu's entourage had earlier said he would return to Zaire at the weekend.

Mr. Mobutu left Zaire on Feb. 21 for southern France, where he owns a luxury Riviera villa. He visited his doctors at a hospital in nearby Monaco the next day.

He underwent radiation therapy following prostate cancer surgery in Switzerland in August, his son and spokesman Mobutu Nzinga told Reuters last week, raising speculation that his regular visits to the Monaco hospital were for follow-up cancer treatments.

But Mr. Nzinga insisted the visits were for routine tests.

The aide said Mr. Mobutu had now decided to extend his stay in France until at least midweek so as "not to interrupt the work undertaken since his arrival in France, where it is easier to carry on consultations."

"His concern is to clarify the situation in the east. There are no negotiations under way with anyone, but there are discussions with the Americans and the Europeans, which has led to an impressive telephone ballet," the aide told Reuters.

## Clinton certifies Mexico as drug-fighting ally

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton Saturday defended his decision to declare Mexico a U.S. partner in the war on drugs, praising President Ernesto Zedillo for his "brave action" in a tough battle that must be fought together.

"Make no mistake about it, Mexico has a serious drug problem," Mr. Clinton said in his weekly radio address. "But Mexico's leaders recognise that problem and they have the will to fight it."

Mr. Clinton sidestepped confrontation with a key neighbour and trade partner in certifying Mexico as an ally in the fight against drugs, but set the stage for a domestic political challenge from congress.

His decision Friday brought a barrage of criticism from Democratic colleagues, including Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California who is leading an effort to overturn the ruling, as well as opposition Republicans.

But Mr. Clinton said Saturday the United States must "do whatever we can to give them the means to succeed."

"Mexican President Zedillo is fighting a tough, uphill battle against the drug cartels which corrupt Mexico's

law enforcement agencies. But President Zedillo has taken brave action," he said, citing the firing of 1,200 officials, extradition of criminals for the first time, passage of tough laws, and the arrest of his own drug czar for corruption.

"Stamping out the drug trade is a long-term battle, it won't be won overnight ... This is a battle we must fight together with other nations," Mr. Clinton said.

He added, however, that the United States would continue to press Mexico to take "tough action" against drugs.

A senior White House official said U.S. certification of Mexico was "performance-based," meaning the Mexican government is expected to demonstrate progress on a variety of fronts in order to justify its approval as an ally in the drug war.

The Washington Post quoted administration officials as saying that under the agreement, Mexico had agreed to allow U.S. drug enforcement agents to carry arms in Mexico. The Mexican government has denied such a deal was struck.

In its Sunday editions, the Post also said Mexico offered formal promises of greater cooperation in extraditing drug lords, shutting

down money-laundering operations and attacking corruption in its government.

The senior official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said U.S. officials have been engaged in extensive talks with Mexican government and police authorities over the last couple of weeks to improve cooperation.

"We will begin looking for continued improvement in those cooperative efforts over the next several months," the official said.

Many members of congress were not mollified by the reasoning behind the Clinton administration's certification of Mexico.

"I don't think it's the right decision," declared representative Richard Gephardt of Missouri, the Democratic leader in the house of Representatives.

Democratic Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts said certification sent the wrong signal to Mexico and raised questions about the seriousness of U.S. efforts to fight drugs.

Republicans were even less kind, calling Mr. Clinton soft on drugs and warning of an erosion of support for Mexico.

"Certifying that Mexico is cooperating with the United States in the war on drugs

is, in a word, a fraud," said North Carolina Republican Jesse Helms, the powerful chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

"Certification sends a message to those officials who are in bed with the drug lords that the United States is not serious ... The American people must pray that this decision will not stand," he said.

Forty of the 100 U.S. senators signed a letter to Mr. Clinton this week urging him to decertify Mexico because of widespread government corruption. Criticism in Congress was fuelled by the embarrassing arrest last week of Mexico's anti-narcotics chief Gen. Jesus Gutierrez Rebollo for allegedly taking bribes from a drug kingpin.

Nevertheless, Mr. Clinton went ahead with certification on the advice of his foreign policy team who argued that to do anything else would only have made it even harder to win Mexico's cooperation in the war on drugs.

"To decertify Mexico would just weaken President (Ernesto) Zedillo just as he is fighting to weed out corruption among officials in his government," one official said.

## N. Korea turns to diplomacy after domestic dramas

SEOUL (R) — Reclusive North Korea has sent a mission to New York for peace talks with U.S. and South Korean officials, turning to diplomacy after a period of introspection prompted by a key defection and the death of two senior figures.

News of the delegation's departure came from Pyongyang's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) Saturday only hours after the agency reported the funeral of the First Vice Defence Minister, Kim Kwang-Jin.

KCNA said the delegation, which is to attend a briefing on proposed four-nation talks, was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Kim Kye-Kwan.

The New York briefing, set for March 5, was called to discuss a joint proposal by the U.S. and South Korean presidents for talks between the three countries plus China on working for a lasting peace on the divided peninsula.

Nearly half a century after the 1950-53 Korean conflict ended in a truce, south and north remain technically at

war, locked in tense confrontation across the world's last cold war frontier.

Kim Kwang-Jin, who died of "incurable sickness" on February 27, was the second senior North Korean official to leave the scene within days. His superior, Defence Minister Choe Kwang, died on February 21 after a heart attack.

Mr. Choe led a group of elders who had fought alongside North Korea's late "great leader," President Kim Il-Sung, in the guerrilla war for Korean independence from Japanese colonial rule.

The deaths of the two old-guard revolutionaries quickly followed the defection of Stalinist Pyongyang's top ideologue, Hwang Jang-Yop, who sought shelter last month in the South Korean embassy in Beijing.

Mr. Hwang, the most senior official ever to flee North Korea, walked into the embassy on Feb. 12 and has been there ever since, surrounded by a Chinese security cordon of police with

assault rifles, anti-riot trucks mounted with water cannon and armoured personnel carriers.

Seoul's efforts to persuade Beijing to allow Mr. Hwang safe passage to Seoul have so far yielded no progress.

South Korean President Kim Young-Sam said Saturday that Mr. Hwang's defection "eloquently illustrates the grave situation North Korea finds itself in," and urged Pyongyang to follow the path to reconciliation and cooperation.

North Korea has been on the brink of famine after severe floods in the past two years devastated croplands in a nation already suffering from chronic food shortages.

Pyongyang, which at first insisted that Mr. Hwang had been kidnapped by South Korean agents, later softened its stance and vowed to dismiss the ideologue if he had in fact defected.

South Korea Sunday denied a Japanese newspaper report that Mr. Hwang had agreed not to insist on going to Seoul.

"Hwang has not changed

his mind, and he still wants to go to Seoul," Foreign Ministry director Yoo Kwang-Sook told Yonhap news agency.

Mr. Yoo said Mr. Hwang was "in good health" and had been spending his free time inside the consulate premises since his defection bid "doing some writing."

The Asahi Shimbun in Tokyo Sunday quoted unnamed South Korean sources in Beijing as saying Mr. Hwang wanted to go to Seoul.

But, because of North Korean objections, his plan had been compromised and he had agreed instead to go to the United States, Asahi said. The newspaper quoted the same sources as saying Mr. Hwang's health was deteriorating.

"The South Korean government will continue to negotiate with the Chinese authorities so that Hwang will be able to defect to Seoul as he intended," Mr. Yoo said.

Foreign ministry officials said here last week they do not expect any quick decision by China on the defection.



## Jordan Times

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Chairman of the Board of Directors:

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Editor-in-Chief:

GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

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University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.

Telephones: 684311, 696634

Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO

Facsimile: 696183

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## Short and long term solutions

A BLOATED bureaucracy is a curse that afflicts most developing countries, Jordan included. But how do we go about tackling it is the question that needs to be answered. In his letter to the prime minister on Saturday His Majesty King Hussein offered an interim solution: to send unneeded public servants home, with full pay, until such time when they could find other jobs in which they can be productive. This is necessary for now because the "excess baggage" that the government is carrying, whether in terms of people or paper work, is hampering the public sector — and not just by making it a bigger bureaucracy. The social ills, the corruption, the frustration, the inefficiency that are caused by employing more than twice the number of people needed to run our public sector and paying them at most half of what they need or should be earning can be considerably reduced just by keeping the inefficient half at home — for now.

In the longer term, though, real, permanent and more feasible solutions have to be found. The problem has to be tackled at the roots if we want to reach such solutions.

But the reasons that have led to the current state of affairs need to be identified before we even begin to think about answers.

No two people can disagree that one of the main reasons for our bloated bureaucracy has been over-dependence on the state by our citizens. This is not the time or the place to discuss why this has become the case and to apportion blame for it. What is important is to take steps by this government to fight this phenomenon through any number of measures that it sees fit. No less than a white revolution can make this goal attainable, and as such this solution has to be long term. For the shorter term, however, let the government just do what the King has requested from it. Maybe such a step will be the beginning of what truly has to be done.

### ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE PLANNED Israeli settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim on the outskirts of Jerusalem represents the last link of a chain of Jewish settlements being erected around Arab Jerusalem to cut it off from the rest of the West Bank, according to Rashid Hussain, a writer for Al Aswaq. In his drive to carry out the programmes of the Likud Party and in his drive to fulfil his promises to the extreme right groups of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu is losing no time in the course of judiciously the Palestinian lands and has been active in this police ever since coming to power last May, said the writer. The Israeli prime minister launched his mandate by digging a tunnel under the Aqsa Mosque, delayed the redeployment of Israeli forces in the Hebron area until he clinched a new accord with Mr. Arafat, securing 20 per cent of the Arab city for the benefit of the Jewish settlers and his bulldozers never stopped opening ring roads, uprooting Arab houses, Arab trees and Arab citizens from their homeland, he continued. Mr. Netanyahu's announcement of plans to start building the "Har Homa" settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim did not surprise anyone because it is part of the Likud Party's programme to perpetuate Israel's occupation of the Holy City and to cut off the northern parts of Palestine from the southern parts, he added. The writer said that it remains to be seen if the Arabs are serious in dealing with the new challenge which, said the writer, has returned Arab-Israeli relations back to square one.

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily said Sunday that the Arabs are duty-bound to come to the help of their kinsmen in Sudan or any other Arab country, no matter whether faced with internal or external threats. Salah Jarrar said some Arab states have been claiming that the conflict in Sudan is a purely internal affairs, something which does not require or justify other Arab countries' intervention. But how about southern Lebanon, the Syrian Golan Heights and the Palestinian lands which are occupied by Israel which maintains aggression on the Arab lands, and what is the excuse of these Arab countries in failing to come to the help of countries like Yemen, whose islands are under Eritrean occupation, asked the writer. He said Sudan is beset with internal troubles, but it is also exposed to external threats aimed at its sovereignty and territorial integrity and it is in need of support and backing for its efforts to protect itself and fend off the foreign aggression. By claiming that Sudan's troubles stem from internal strife among its various political factions, he said, these Arab states are in fact trying to shirk their responsibilities towards their kinsmen and escaping from a national duty.

## Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

# Children — legislation vs parental neglect

IT HAS become a common phenomenon in Amman to witness drunken minors in restaurants and to see teenage smokers in the streets flaunting what they believe is an expression of their adulthood but which, alas, is nothing but a form of compensation for negligence. Such behaviour costs the nation dearly and a government policy action banning the consumption of alcohol and tobacco by minors is a must.

In recent years, with the birth of the affluent middle class in Jordan and the advent of a wide disparity in income between the rich and the poor, children of wealthy families have become a true manifestation of the economies of the leisure class. As a rule, economists believe that the rich families favour work and self-realisation to reproduction and child rearing which requires time and effort that is best invested in other types of employment, and because they view children as more of a drain on their resources than as a source of income. Farmers and the poor tend to have more children and send them to the labour market at an early age. Furthermore, the poor do not send their children for higher education because of the more immediate needs of the parents and the lack of income to sponsor the children while attending college. Additionally, because rich families usually have some retirement package or fund set aside for their old age, they tend to part with their children upon entry into the labour force which usually follows a college education. On the other hand, the poor tend to cling to their children and attempt to convince them of the merits of supporting the parents in their old age. This is also true in countries where the welfare system is underdeveloped or inadequate.

Underlying this logic is the principle that the rich parents view their leisure time as a very expensive commodity. In fact, the more money a person makes at a profession, the more valuable his/her leisure time becomes. (This provides an explanation, as Professor Gary Becker and other economists have pointed out, for the increasing availability of fast food restaurants and the spread of ready-made meals: as more women choose to enter the labour market, their free or leisure time becomes more expensive relative to the leisure time of women fifty years ago, and therefore they choose to buy a ready-made meal than spend time preparing one at home).

Rich parents tend to spend less time with their children than poor parents. They also rely on other means to com-

pensate their children for the time they do not spend with them. Substitutes for the parents' time may include the time of the maid, more pocket money, expensive toys, trips and "quality time" (which usually means very little time). In other words, wealthy parents have the means to substitute capital for labour in the production of children.

Herein lies the dilemma. Minors in Jordan, a country which refuses to admit that its citizens do consume alcohol, are left completely unprotected by the parents at a very early age. Twelve, thirteen and fourteen-year-olds go without the supervision of adults where alcohol is served and purchase and consume alcohol in large quantities with the money their parents give them to compensate for parental advice and companionship. Establishment owners cannot be blamed for serving them; after all they are not their parents and they want to make a decent profit at the end of the day. The parents also cannot be blamed for wanting to better themselves and the nation by working or socialising for longer hours than expected of them. The children are not adults and do not know what is good for them, they believe they are immortal and who wouldn't at the age of fourteen or thirteen?

The government and society must play their part. Because juvenile delinquency imposes a cost to society. Because it is very expensive to lose the brain of a person at any stage of development, never mind the loss of one at such an early stage.

(And because, this is the way things are done in places that had to cope with such problems long before we did). Serving alcohol to minors in Western societies is strictly prohibited and we should follow suit. Additionally, in many states in the U.S., no person under the age of seventeen is allowed to purchase cigarettes. Adults who sell such products to underage persons face heavy fines and possible imprisonment. There is no reason why we should not create such legislation in Jordan. In fact, it will be more than welcomed by the parents of the cellular phone-touting juvenile crowd.

Policy or government regulation is never the best answer. The government is nobody's parent. Legislative action is a second best solution in an imperfect world where people do not fasten their seat-belts if there is no fine for not doing so. And for the sake of children, somebody out there must care enough to act to protect the innocent.

## LETTERS

### Why they won't let us forget

To the Editor:

I READ, with interest as usual, Rami Khouri's most recent column in which he acknowledges his understanding of the Jewish and Israeli "dilemma" in continuing to hunt down former Nazis and collaborators.

However, as an American, who has been subjected to decades of media propaganda regarding the rationalisations behind the creation of Israel, and that state's subsequent policies towards the Arabs, I believe a more in-depth critique of the Jewish/Israeli obsession with hunting down and harassing individuals (most now in the last years of their lives) is necessary. Furthermore, I would suggest that in understanding this preoccupation, one must recognise several important considerations:

1. The effort by the Jewish/Israeli lobby to portray the policies under Nazi Germany as unique in the history of the world.

2. The refusal of the Jewish/Israeli lobby to accept the changing conditions in the present world, and the position of their peoples in this context.

3. The direct correlation between the public relations efforts of the Jewish/Israeli lobby to resurrect the past as rationalisations and/or distractions of their current domestic policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians.

In discussing the first point, allow me to clarify that I fully acknowledge the tragedies of the Jewish peoples under the Nazi regime, and understand their sensitivities regarding this horrendous event in their history. While there are certain extremist groups which question the Holocaust, these are a minority, given little or no credibility among serious students of history. However, to suggest that what happened to Jews from 1933 to 1945 was a unique event in world history reveals one's ignorance of the chronicles of man's injustice to man.

While the attempted "genocide" of the Armenians is well-documented and recognised by the international community, other examples of efforts to eradicate populations tend to be overlooked: attempts by the Spanish to liquidate the native populations of Latin America; attempts by the American settlers to liquidate the native populations of North America; attempts by various European colonial expeditions to eliminate native peoples in Asia; attempts by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia to eliminate its own population.

"Genocide" is not unique in world history. What happened to the Jewish people in Germany was a horrible tragedy, and unacceptable to anyone with a concern for their fellow human beings. The programmatic attempt to eliminate this group was perhaps the most organised and systematic effort we have witnessed in the history of mankind. I believe, however, this was not only a reflection of the hatred towards Jews (by a relatively small percentage of the Germans), but equally a reflection of the efficiency of the Nazi regime combined with the technological advancements which expedited their efforts.

The second point I raise concerns the refusal of the Jewish/Israeli lobby to accept that the brutalisation of their people at the hands of the Nazis took place over five decades ago. Conditions within Europe in the late-1920s and early-1930s created an incubus in which an Adolph Hitler (or Benito Mussolini) could command the centre stage of public opinion, aspire to power and then implement his own political agenda. Unfortunately, this agenda included an attempt to conquer Europe and eliminate the Jewish population within that continent.

Given the prevailing conditions in the world (the global depression), as well as those within Germany (hyperinflation, rampant unemployment, etc.), the rise of Nazism, accompanied by Hitler's anti-semitism, was almost inevitable. The fact that his rhetoric appealed to the nationalism of the German people could be expected. Failures of Western Europe to stem the tide of Prussian chauvinism and the subsequent effects of Hitler's military strategies led to the implementation of his programme to eliminate the Jews. However, to portray these events as

indicative of the position of Jews throughout the world, fails to recognise the unique conditions of the world, and within Germany at this point in history.

Over fifty years have passed since the end of World War II. Germany has transformed its political and economic institutions and Israel has established itself as a powerful state within the Middle East. Yet, to hear the rhetoric of the Jewish/Israeli lobby, the events which impacted their lives took place recently. There are full-time organisations dedicated to hunting down octogenarians who were barely out of adolescence when Hitler came to power. Other individuals and groups are busily tracing the assets of Jews who were victims of the Nazi atrocities. Certain prominent people (such as Elie Weisel) appear to have no other agenda than to perpetuate the actions against the Jews during a very limited time span of human history.

The question I raise is: "When will they get over this obsession?" For how long will Germans and the rest of the non-Jewish community be expected to bear the guilt of the actions of the Nazi regime? Would any progress occur in the world if every victimised group throughout history insisted upon continual redress of their grievances? Will it ever be possible for individuals to criticise policies of Israel without being labelled "anti-Semitic"?

There is an expression that "time heals all wounds." One wonders if the Jewish/Israeli lobby has ever heard of this, and that if so, they believe their slogan of "never forget" is more important.

My third and final point relates to the interrelationship between the above two ideas. I believe the attempt to portray the tragedy of the Jewish peoples under Hitler's Germany as an unique historical event, and the failure to acknowledge the circumstances under which this event occurred, represents a deliberate ploy on the part of the Jewish/Israeli lobby. By focusing on the victimisation of Jews, and ignoring the advancement of their people under the state of Israel, the Jewish state can pursue a policy of discrimination against the Palestinians. In fact, the state can systematically attempt to marginalise the existence of Palestinians by controlling resources, including basic necessities, i.e., food, shelter, education, employment, etc.

The arrogance of the present Israeli government can best be understood by its acceptance of the two premises outlined in my essay. To question Israeli policies is to ignore the tragedy of Jews under Nazism. To question Israeli policies is to ignore the vulnerabilities of Jews in the world today. To question Israeli policies is to ignore the uniqueness of the Jewish heritage. All these reinforce the ability of the government of Israel to pursue internal policies which are contrary to precepts of humanity. In fact, these policies appear to represent the pursuit of programmes by Israel which are very similar to those of Hitler's regime, albeit against a different group.

I will conclude by stating that I do not underestimate the tragedies of the Jews under Nazism and other regimes. However, I believe that similar tragedies have occurred to other peoples. I also understand, to paraphrase Santayana, that ignoring history may lead to its repetition. At the same time, I believe that a deeper understanding of history may demonstrate that conditions at one point in time cannot be replicated at other points in time. Finally, I would suggest that manipulating and using history in order to justify unacceptable internal policies can only be detrimental to the credibility of those responsible for adopting such an approach.

Bill Ennenbach,  
Telefax No. 700996,  
Amman.

## Human Rights-File

# Palestinian property rights stand on their own merits

By Waleed M. Sadi

THE MAYOR of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, has cried wolf at the plan of the Palestinians to gather information about their land ownership in West Jerusalem and described this Palestinian step as an added proof that they have designs on the whole city and not only on its eastern side.

The mayor also suggested that any real estate belonging to the Palestinians, including those who are legal residents of the city in accordance with Israel's own criteria, should be traded off against properties belonging to Jews in Arab countries, such as Morocco, Tunis, Egypt or even Syria.

To start with, since when does the collection of title deeds for Palestinian lands and houses in the western part of the city constitute a "conspiracy" of sorts? I have always thought that Israel, which prides itself to being a living democracy among despotic rules, would be the first to think and act lawfully and democratically. Why the mayor of Jerusalem and all like-minded Israelis would want the Palestinians to forget about their houses in West Jerusalem, which they had acquired legally and still have title deeds to attest to their ownership?

The thousands and thousands of houses that the Palestinian had left behind in Jerusalem are living testimony that they were once the lawful residents of the Holy City. Surely the mayor himself is haunted by these stone monuments every time he tours the city as they must remind him of the truth, the whole truth about Jerusalem. Surely he knows that what counts under international law is not historical or even religious references that belong to the ancient past but legal proof of who owned what at the time Israel conquered most of Jerusalem in 1948, later, in 1967, extending its conquest to the entire city.

The mayor must also be reminded that international pronouncements on the city, including those adopted by the U.N. Security Council, have become part and parcel of customary international law that are binding on all parties.

Is there any legal way to obliterate the continuing evidence of Palestinian ownership of so much of West Jerusalem? Without delving into ancient history and whose capital Jerusalem was, our only concern now is the properties of Palestinians legally acquired and admittedly worth billions of dollars.

What kind of peace can we expect to nurture in the area as long as Arab Jerusalemites can only see, but not touch or enter into, the properties that were once their homes and where they, their children and their ancestors were born and reared? No Mr. mayor, lasting and durable peace can never be constructed on falsehoods and injustice so blatant that even you, yourself, can see and feel every time you criss-cross Jerusalem. Why then deny residents of Jerusalem the right to search for their houses and properties in a city in which you yourself admit that they are legal residents?

As for the bizarre argumentation that the property rights of one people, the Palestinians, can be traded off for property rights of Jews in Arab countries, the minutest knowledge of the law on property rights anywhere in the world would

explain to the mayor that the Palestinians are not Moroccans or Tunisian or Egyptians or Syrians or whatever else under international law, and their rights and obligations are not one and the same with those of the other Arabs. Surely the distinguished mayor knows that the various Arab countries are sovereign states and there is no way that one may deal with them and their respective peoples as constituting one sovereign country and one people.

To juxtapose the rights or obligations of one Arab country or one Arab people with those of others is no different from trading off property rights of Ecuadorians with those belonging to Argentines. It is as simple as that.

For the mayor of Jerusalem to state now that Israelis have property claims against Arab countries and that those property rights should be addressed against the property rights of Palestinians in Israel is a legal folly of the highest order, and he knows it.

Property rights of the Palestinians, whether in West Jerusalem or elsewhere in Israel, stand on their own merits and no court would accept to deal with them in conjunction with Israeli rights in sovereign and independent Arab states.

And by way of a footnote only, have Jewish properties been confiscated, in fact, in Arab states where they once resided? If so, what was the extent of this confiscation? Are the concerned Jews deprived or have they ever been deprived of the right to seek redress and remedy in the courts of the countries accused of taking away their houses and other properties? I have yet to know the exact picture of this side of the equation, even though its adjudication does not in any way prejudice the rights of Palestinians to their own properties in Israel.

It is simply most unfortunate that the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty did not specifically address the property rights of Jordanians of Palestinian origin. I think our negotiators missed the opportunity of a lifetime to deal with that dimension of Palestinian property rights. Accepting to deal with these property rights at a later stage and under the refugee issue was a big mistake. In any case, without the just and equitable resolution of this long-standing issue, the wound will stay open for as long as there is a people and individuals not prepared to see their houses and lands taken away from them by conquest.

History has demonstrated time and time again that wounds of this sort keep conflicts between states and peoples simmering and ready to explode at an appropriate occasion, when the geopolitical equation changes. The bitter experiences acquired from the Treaty of Versailles, that ended World War I must be a lesson for all parties concerned. That peace treaty ended up to be the very prescription for World War II because of its inequities.

It is in the interest of Israel, including that of the mayor of Jerusalem, to deal head on with Palestinian property rights instead of trying to brush them aside. By ignoring them, Mayor Olmert and like-minded Israelis would be writing, again the very prescription for the continuation of the conflict, no matter which party appears stronger and ahead at this juncture in history.



## Deputies denounce Israeli plan, call for strong counter-action

By Maria Bizri

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Several deputies at the Lower House of Parliament on Sunday condemned Israel's recent decision to allow the building of more Jewish settlements in Arab East Jerusalem.

During a regular session of the House, deputies reiterated Jordan's rejection of Israel's settlement policy in the occupied territories.

Deputy Fawaz Zu'bi (Ramtha) said: "When Jordan signed a peace treaty with Israel, it viewed it as a strategic decision and a treaty by which all parties need to abide in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace."

"The Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty and the Oslo accords were and still are the true test of Israeli intentions towards peace," he added, stressing that "since the Likud came to power, the Israeli government has demonstrated no respect for peace and has adopted numerous measures which can only be described as racist."

Mr. Zu'bi emphasised the importance of Arab East

Jerusalem, adding that Jordan had a crucial role in bringing the issue to the forefront of the international community and in forcing Israel to abide by its agreements.

Several other deputies echoed their colleagues' concerns about the status of Jerusalem and the peace process warning against Israeli attempts of Judaising the Holy City.

Deputy Hamzeh Mansour of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) reiterated the Kingdom's stance on the issue stressing the "need to stop the continued Israeli rape of Arab land."

He said deputies had forwarded a memorandum denouncing Israeli actions to House Speaker Sa'd Havel Srour demanding that the government cut all official ties with Israel.

"The Lower House's agenda, however, did not refer to the issue in any shape or form, and came as a normal agenda, disregarding the importance of Jerusalem to the entire Arab, Muslim and Christian communities," he asserted.

Mr. Mansour stressed "that the government

should not overlook these demands and that in case it does not call a halt to all Jordanian-Israeli relations, I, followed by others in this House, will have to leave the floor."

Mr. Srour responded that the government will do all it deems necessary and that the House must, despite the current disturbing events, continue its legislative duties.

On other issues, Deputy Toufik Khreishan praised His Majesty King Hussein's letter to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in which he dedicated Al Hashemiyeh Palace as a home for orphans.

Mr. Khreishan stressed that the King's decision "reflects his sense of utmost responsibility towards his people and his humanitarian sensitivity towards the underprivileged."

During Sunday's session the House ratified 18 articles of the customs draft law, forwarded the 1997 Al Bait University draft law to the House Education Committee and endorsed the 1996 Ma'an Municipality and Higher Health Council draft laws.



CARNIVAL IN LEBANON: Lebanese scouts dance in Beirut, during a carnival organised by the ministry of economy to mark the end of the February "50% discount operation" in Lebanon. The operation, which will be repeated next year, successfully attracted twice as many tourists as compared to February 1996, according to first estimates (AFP photo)

## Arafat heads for Clinton talks with Jabal Abu Ghneim high on agenda

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat left here for the United States on Sunday carrying strong Arab backing against Israeli plans to build a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meanwhile vowed that Jerusalem would remain under Israeli sovereignty in an interview with BBC television.

"It has been the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years," said the premier, taking questions over his controversial plans to build a settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem.

Jerusalem "has been taken from us, it was divided (...) now it's an open city, it's open to all three faiths and it's always been that way, under Israeli sovereignty and that's how it's going to remain," he said.

Mr. Arafat did not make a departure statement in Cairo, but at an Arab League session on Saturday he threatened to declare an independent Palestinian state to counter the Israeli plan.

The threat to unilaterally proclaim an independent Palestinian state drew condemnation from Israel on Sunday with President Ezer Weizman saying it would be "an incredibly stupid thing to do."

Danny Naveh, an Israeli government spokesman, said "such a move would constitute a flagrant violation of the agreements reached with Israel."

"It would be a serious mistake which we would consider with the utmost

seriousness," he told public radio.

"A unilateral proclamation would be an incredibly stupid thing to do and would be evidence of blindness on the part of Arafat," Mr. Weizman said.

Mr. Weizman said he hoped everyone involved "would display some intelligence" in resolving the latest Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

"I hope that this crisis will end," the Israeli head of state told reporters while visiting a hospital in the northern city of Haifa where Israeli soldiers wounded in southern Lebanon are receiving treatment.

Mr. Naveh, a close advisor to Mr. Netanyahu, added that "Israel is prepared for this possibility (the unilateral declaration of a Palestinian state by Arafat)."

Mr. Arafat accused Mr. Netanyahu of "torpedoing" the Middle East peace process.

"We are supposed to declare our Palestinian state in five years, but he is making changes and violating the agreements we have reached and ignoring the negotiations on a final status," Mr. Arafat said.

"So, if I declare today from the Arab League the creation of a Palestinian state what will be his position? (For me) it will be one for one," he told the Arab League session.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the final status of the Palestinian territories, including Arab East Jerusalem, are scheduled to begin this month.

The Arab League accused the Jewish state of delivering "the heaviest blow

to the peace process" and demanded an immediate halt to "racist and expansionist practices hostile to the Palestinians."

Before leaving Cairo for his meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton on Monday, Mr. Arafat told editors in chief of Egyptian newspapers that his talks in Washington will focus on the latest Israeli plans for Jerusalem.

"I will discuss the peace process in all its aspects with President Bill Clinton and the question of Jabal Abu Ghneim will be at the top of the agenda," he said late Saturday according to the Egyptian news agency MENA.

Mr. Arafat stopped in Cairo on his way to Washington for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, who is to meet Mr. Netanyahu here on Wednesday ahead of a March 10 visit to the United States by the Egyptian leader.

The United States has already warned that the plan to build a Jewish neighbourhood called Har Homa in Arab East Jerusalem could damage its efforts to bolster the peace process. Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa urged Israel on Saturday to drop the plan to build Har Homa.

"The settlement issue is a dangerous one which is not based on any legal principle," he said. "I call on Israel to stop this action."

Mr. Musa described the settlement scheme as "provocation against the Arabs" and said it would hurt efforts to boost the normalisation of Arab-Israeli ties.

## Christians say 'Har Homa' is planned at ancient church site

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Christian leaders in Jerusalem have objected to the establishment of a Jewish settlement in the eastern part of the Holy City on the site of church ruins from the Crusader period, an official said Sunday.

The Israeli government approved last week the construction of 6,500 homes for Jews abal Abu Ghneim in Arab East Jerusalem, the same hill where several churches once stood as a stop for Christian pilgrims.

"The heads of the Christian communities wrote a common statement to the Israeli authorities against this," Bishop Timothy Eweque of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch in Jerusalem told AFP. The objections were not answered, he added.

According to a report by Judith Green, an archaeologist with Israel's Hebrew University, Crusader pilgrims would stop at the churches on their way from the Holy City to the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

Palestinians had warned of massive protests in light of the government decision

but approval of the long-awaited settlement, known to Israelis as Har Homa, passed without incident.

Construction at the site will be delayed for at least a few weeks with the petition to the supreme court of a Jewish man who says he owns more than 50 per cent of the land on the hill.

But the Christian communities have not yet announced whether they will take the matter up in court.

The mufti of Jerusalem warned that war with Israel will be necessary to obtain control over the Holy City if the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) fails to get it through negotiations. Al Hayat newspaper reported Sunday. "I believe that the return of Jerusalem through negotiations is impossible," Sheikh Akrama Sabri told the London-based Arabic daily.

"If the Palestinian leadership fails to take back the city through negotiations there is nothing left before us except war," he said.

Iran meanwhile condemned the Israelis to build in Arab East Jerusalem, saying it threatened the

peace process, the Qatar News Agency reported.

Qatar was among Gulf states most open to forging links with Israel as part of the Mideast peace process. But it backed off after the election of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu derailed the Jewish state's talks with Palestinians.

A Qatari Foreign Ministry official said Saturday that the new Jewish settlements "take the region back into an atmosphere of tension and violence and violate international law," the official news agency said.

It said Qatar holds the international community responsible for any situation resulting from "Israel's settlements and its expansionist policies."

Also Sunday, Bahrain criticised Israel's decision to build the new settlement in Arab East Jerusalem, saying it violates international law and hinders the peace process, the official Gulf News Agency reported.

Iran condemned the Israeli plan and called on Muslim states to respond firmly.

## Israeli plan endangers peace process

(Continued from page 1)

Mr. Kabariti said King Hussein sent a message to current Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in which he defined the Jordanian stand which considers any demographic and geographic change in Arab Jerusalem as a red line that cannot be tolerated.

In his letter, Mr. Kabariti said, the King made it clear that the status of Jerusalem is linked to the peace process, adding that Israel's stand in the final status negotiations over Jerusalem will determine the kind of peace that will prevail in the region.

"We demand that Jewish settlement programmes be halted not only in Arab Jerusalem but also everywhere else in the occupied Arab territories," said Mr. Kabariti. "We consider building settlements as illegitimate and that any expansion of the existing settlements constitutes an aggression on the Arab lands and a violation of UN resolutions and the Oslo accords."

Any tampering with the

status of Jerusalem, which is the cornerstone of the whole peace process, constitutes a violation of all agreements and peace treaties," he added.

He reiterated Jordan's backing for the Palestinian leadership and people in their quest to regain their rights on their national soil.

"As to the prospects of Jordan taking any measures against Israel, this is a matter of sovereignty which the government will decide on in a manner that will conform with our interests and the requirements of our legal obligations," he added.

The Upper House of Parliament (Senate) also condemned all Israeli decisions to Judaize Arab Jerusalem and to change the Holy City's demographic and geographic features.

In a statement issued at the end of a session dedicated to discussing the Israeli decision to establish Jewish settlements on Jabal Abu Ghneim, the Senate stressed the need for reaching a just and lasting solution to the issue of Jerusalem.

Any solution falling short

of returning the land to its legitimate owners, allowing followers of the three monotheistic religions to exercise the freedom of worship in Arab Jerusalem and recognising Jerusalem as the capital of the Palestinian state will not help establish a just and lasting peace, the statement said.

The Senate said it supported King Hussein's statement about settlements, in which he said that the latest Israeli measures pose a direct threat to the peace process and undermine the achievements made so far on the path of peace.

The Senate voiced support for the efforts of the King and the government to convince the Israeli government to reverse its decision to confiscate Arab land and build Israeli settlements in Jerusalem.

The statement said the Jordanian people approved the peace treaty with Israel in the hope that it will be part of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy and the land for peace principle.

Jordan has also supported

the Oslo accord between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, including the postponement of discussion of the issue of Jerusalem to facilitate the negotiation process rather than to foster occupation and impose a fait accompli policy and change the status of Jerusalem in favour of Israel, it said.

The Senate called on Arab and Islamic leaders to shoulder their full responsibility towards Jerusalem and adopt a united stand to force the Israeli government to reverse its decision.

It called on Arab leaders to convene an emergency Arab summit to take the necessary measures to defend the Arab city, prevent its Judaisation and ensure its return to its legitimate people.

The Senate called on the Christian and Muslim worlds to unite their efforts and join hands to restore the Arab rights in Jerusalem, safeguard the Islamic and Christian shrines there and to ensure the implementation of international legitimacy.

The Senate hailed the Palestinian people's struggle and their peaceful efforts to counter Israeli decisions and pledged support for them.

## Israel hints it will not meet pullout schedule

(Continued from page 1)

Homa and the scale of the first stage of the withdrawal," he said.

The Haaretz newspaper reported last week that Mr. Netanyahu promised to increase the area to be evacuated to from two per cent to 10 per cent if Mr. Arafat ensured that the Palestinian reaction to the settlement decision was not violent.

Israel has already withdrawn from major Palestinian cities in the West Bank, except for about 20 per cent of Hebron and has granted partial autonomy to Palestinians in about 28 per cent of the West Bank and most of the Gaza Strip.

At a roadblock on the West Bank on Sunday,

Israeli troops opened fire on Palestinian workers, injuring four, the Voice of Palestine radio said. Israel's army spokesman said the troops opened fire with rubber bullets when the workers stoned them.

The Voice of Palestine said four workers were injured, one by live ammunition. All four were treated and released, the radio said.

The clash apparently broke out when soldiers refused to allow the workers to pass the roadblock because they did not have permits to enter Israel.

In Hebron, four tombstones were smashed at the old Jewish cemetery in what settler spokesman Noam Arnon called "a very grave act of violence."

About 450 Jewish set-

tlers live in Hebron amid 120,000 Palestinians.

A right-wing international Jewish youth movement Betar said on Sunday it has sought Israeli approval for 60 members to join an army unit to be established in Hebron.

"We submitted a proposal two months ago and are expecting a response in the near future," said Betar's leader Amos Hermon.

The army unit that Betar has proposed to be set up within the settler community in Hebron would include some 40 new immigrants from France and England, Mr. Hermon said.

A defence ministry spokesman said such a plan has not yet been approved for Hebron.

## Netanyahu told Clinton he accepts 242

(Continued from page 1)

will raise the issue of Syrian-Russian military relations, it said.

Last month, Israel criticised South African plans to supply Syria with arms.

The South African press has reported that negotiations were in progress on shipping sophisticated equipment to Syria that would improve the performance of its T-72 tanks.

South African Defence Minister Joe Modise said Feb. 14 that South Africa had made no final decision

on the arms sale. On Feb. 11, South African Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz Pahad said Damascus would make no decision for 2 1/2 years and that "the question is not on the agenda."

Meanwhile, Syria called on the international community on Sunday to impose sanctions on Israel for approving a new Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem. "It's no longer possible to keep silent before the Israeli policy of settling Jerusalem," the official government newspaper

Tishrin said. "The international community must respond in the firmest and most efficient way to the Mr. Netanyahu government which is undermining the foundations of the peace process," it added.

"Arab and international efforts must be linked up to impose sanctions on Israel, so it will respect international resolutions and halt its settlement plans and its aggressive and expansionist policy," Tishrin said in an apparent reference to resolutions 242 and 338.

## Qatari crown prince arrives Wednesday

(Continued from page 1)

be the first by Sheikh Jassem abroad after assuming his present post as crown prince.

Mr. Nasser said that the visit reflects the strong brotherly ties between the two countries.

Sheikh Jassem is an accomplished military officer who received training at Sandhurst Military School in the United Kingdom and served with the Qatari armed forces.

## Conditions exposed

(Continued from page 1)

who had been on medical leave since early this year.

Ms. Mohtaseb, also a social worker in the ministry, said she had come across the problems of the institute in the last days of Ramadan, when she paid a visit to the place at night to check on the well-being of the children, a task ministry employees undertake regularly.

"There were 30 fasting girls and the iftar meal was so poor, lacking all nutrition standards; they had no bread, no soup and no juice," Ms. Mohtaseb said.

"Their situation was miserable. They were malnourished and were wearing very thin clothes for the winter. The institute lacked all kinds of hygienic supplies in the bathrooms and kitchen," she added.

Ms. Mohtaseb reported the conditions to the ministry and was subsequently appointed acting director of the institute with effect from Feb. 2 since Ms. Ghazi, the director, was on leave already.

Nuhu fell seriously sick in the same week.

Both Ms. Khasawneh and Ms. Mohtaseb said the conditions of the institute had deteriorated over the last years as a result of "negligence and mismanagement."

There are seven similar governmental institutions in the Kingdom accommodating 520 orphans, said Ms. Khasawneh.

Those institutions have budgets that are enough to provide the children with a decent living (food and clothes) but unfortunately not all the funds reach them, explained Ms. Khasawneh. She implicitly blamed the Ministry of Social Development.

The institute received two hours of medical care twice a week from volunteer doctors from the Saudi financed "Islamic Relief Organisation."

According to Ms. Khasawneh these medical calls were not enough or consistent.

Children in the institute are either orphans who lost one or both parents, or whose parents are divorced or jailed and illegitimate children usually abandoned by their mothers.

"Some of the children were found on the streets and in garbage containers abandoned by their mothers," Ms. Mohtaseb said. Children abused by stepmothers and step-fathers can also end up in the orphanage, added Ms. Mohtaseb.

In his letter addressed to Mr. Kabariti, King Hussein ordered that Al Hashemiyeh Palace be turned "into a home for the innocent children who should be able to move there once it has been refitted and as soon as possible."

"The maintenance of the children's new home will be the responsibility of the engineering staff of the Royal Court," the King added.

The King, along with Queen Noor and Her Royal Highness Princess Zein will follow up on the affairs of these children with the assistance of the prime minister, the chief of the Royal Court, the chief mufti of the Royal Court Sheikh Izzeddin Khatib, the competent minister, the chief of the Royal Medical Services and officials and specialists in nutrition, mental and physical education.

Children were eating candies, chocolates and lollipops and playing when the Jordan Times visited the institute.

Princess Zein had sent all those gifts to the orphanage two days ago, the director said.

"We need to draw attention to our institute and others serving equal purposes, and their needs for financial donations in order to be able to go on serving and helping the less fortunate in our society," said Ms. Khasawneh.

Save water... every drop counts!



## U.N.: Asians increase investment in Europe

GENEVA (AFP) — Businesses in Asian Tiger economies are beginning to invest seriously in Europe, tempted by its rich markets and to gain access to high technology to strengthen their competitive edge, a U.N. report has said.

Developing Asia's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Europe increased more than eightfold to \$860 million annually during 1992-1994 compared with figures in the previous three years.

Hong Kong leads the pack with its stock of investment in Europe put at \$1.3 billion in 1994, says the report by the U.N. Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

South Korea ranks second in terms of direct investment in Europe while Taiwan is next after Hong Kong on the foreign equity investment front.

The report, entitled:

"Sharing Asia's dynamism: Asian direct investment in the European Union (EU)," draws on a range of sources, including figures from the World Bank and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

Although only about five per cent of the area's total investment is to be found in Europe, the low level "does not reflect neglect, but rather the fact that Asian firms are just at the beginning of their entry into Europe."

"Many firms of the Asian newly industrialising economies increasingly see need for a direct presence in the EU in order to serve this large and rich market," the report points out.

"Others are seeking access to advanced technology and skills, research and development programmes," it says.

Britain is the most popular choice for Asian transna-

tional firms, absorbing 40 per cent of their entire FDI stock. Germany has 30 per cent, and the Netherlands 20 per cent.

Asian firms are also casting eyes around eastern Europe, which offers low-cost production bases and a good platform for entry into the EU internal market.

South Korea's Daewoo for instance has bought into car plants in Romania, Poland and the Czech Republic.

Manufacturing and the service sector are equally represented in the breakdown of the investment, according to the report.

Hong Kong companies have channelled most of their capital into the wholesale and retail trade in Europe.

South Korea's chaebols — industrial giants — have targeted manufacturing, and in particular, the electronics industry which covers three quarters of all their

European investment.

Taiwan too has focussed on manufacturing, which is undertaken mainly by small and medium-sized enterprises. The island's stock of European investment measures at least half a billion dollars.

Taiwanese firms are motivated primarily by rising costs at home, currency appreciation and the need for risk diversification, the study says.

Singapore, in hot rivalry with Hong Kong for regional hub status, is the odd Tiger out. Up to 90 per cent of EU investment from "lion city" has gone into finance.

In the future, Taiwan and South Korea are likely to show more interest in services as banks and insurance companies jump on the bandwagon.

Though currently meagre in comparison with that of the "Tigers", investment

from South East Asian nations such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia is set to rise, geared towards niches such as components and in food, rubber, petrochemicals and textiles.

China and India will probably remain on the sidelines for the "foreseeable future," as they concentrate on neighbouring markets.

As a whole, "one could say the scale of investment in Europe (from developing Asia) is almost a peanuts," senior UNCTAD economist Zbigniew Zimny told a press conference.

The area's share of investment accounts for just one per cent of total Europe's aggregate inward investment.

Hong Kong, the world's fourth largest global investor after the United States, Britain and Germany, directs just three per cent of its investment to the EU.

## Iraq to import \$9 million in food, medicine from Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Iraq will import around \$9 million worth of food, medicine and detergents from Egypt under a deal reached between the two countries, Iraq's envoy to the Arab League was quoted as saying Sunday.

"Iraq has agreed with Egypt to import food, medicine and detergents worth 30 million pounds (\$9 million)," Nabil Najm, Iraq's ambassador to the Cairo-based pan-Arab body, told the official daily Al Gomhuria.

In February, Iraqi Commerce Minister Mohammad Mahdi Al Saleh had talks with his Egyptian counterpart, Nawal Al Tawati, on ways of boosting trade relations between the two countries.

Diplomatic relations between Iraq and Egypt have been severed since 1991, but in 1996 the two countries resumed trade.

In January, an Iraqi delegation visited Cairo and secured a \$2.7 million deal to buy Egyptian medicine. Iraqi diplomatic sources here have said.

Last year several Egyptian businessmen visited Baghdad to explore ways of relaunching trade between the two countries.

In December Iraq revealed its intention to conclude deals worth \$200 million with Egypt to obtain oil and industrial detergents.

## Arab Gulf states warned against abandoning reforms

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states could lose their credibility if they were tempted by a surge in oil prices and abandoned reforms they introduced recently to revive their economies, according to a prominent expert.

Henry Azzam, chief economist at the Saudi National Commercial Bank, said Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states needed to give the private sector a greater role in domestic development to tackle economic and financial difficulties caused by weak crude prices over the past decade.

"GCC states should pursue their economic restructuring programmes regardless of the developments in the oil price," Mr. Azzam wrote in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) economic weekly Emirates Today.

"If oil prices remained strong as they were in 1996, this will provide the GCC decision-makers with a room for moving and manoeuvring. But the price increase should not prompt the GCC to abandon reforms as this will undoubtedly reflect non-credibility and send discouraging signals to the private

sector," he cautioned.

Most GCC members have carried out reforms, including privatisations and rationalisation of expenditure, to spur growth and tackle persistent deficits in their budgets and balances of payments.

The shortfalls emerged in mid 1980s and were a result of low oil prices followed by huge payments for the 1991 Gulf war. The situation is in contrast with the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Gulf countries enjoyed large cash surpluses.

Sharp reduction in spending, to \$68 billion in 1996 from around \$120 billion in 1991, trimmed the combined GCC budget deficit to \$9 billion from a record \$60 billion — official figures showed.

Mr. Azzam said the latest oil price increase would not be enough to help GCC states in attaining sustainable growth and tackle the deficit.

"If the GCC decided to suspend economic reforms, the region will lose the momentum of economic change which has become clear and tangible," he said.

## Indian tax-cutting budget delights business

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Master-juggler Pannipann Chidambaram has delighted Indian business here as he unveiled a balanced budget for the fiscal year to March 1998.

Mr. Chidambaram announced a \$66.4 billion budget that balanced expenditure and revenues exactly.

He slashed taxes across the board, cutting maximum personal income tax from 40 per cent to 30, promised to cut government expenditure and took steps to boost share markets.

A member of an eight-party minority coalition, Mr. Chidambaram also pledged to pump \$1.8 billion of credit into agriculture, "the lifeblood of the economy."

He also began chipping away at the country's insurance monopoly by allowing selected Indian companies to compete in the health insurance sector.

Mr. Chidambaram also said that he was determined to bring the fiscal deficit down to under four per cent in the long term. It currently stands at about \$18.7 billion, or six per cent of gross domestic product.

He said the fiscal deficit would come down to 4.5 per

cent during the fiscal, adding: "I have not wavered in my commitment to continue on the course of fiscal correction."

Former Confederation of Indian Industry president Subodh Bhargava, who heads leading Indian car maker Maruti Udyog, said: "It's a very good growth-orientated budget. It should boost the capital markets and investment."

K. G. Ramanathan, chief of the state-run India Petrochemicals Ltd, said: "It is a very positive budget. I give it eight points on a scale of 10."

"The change from regulation to overall management is an indication that the reforms are continuing and will continue," he added.

Pran Talwar, a car component businessman, added: "I am only disappointed with insurance because it needed a little wider competition. Overall, however, the budget is excellent. It has done a little bit for everyone — the poor, the corporate sector, the capital markets and even senior citizens."

Mr. Chidambaram, however, warned India was facing problems with its rising oil demand and its under-performing power sector.

Mr. Chidambaram said: "Two areas of great concern are the sharp drop in domestic crude oil production and the sluggish performance of the power sector."

## REUTERS

## REUTERS

### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6348	0.6141	1.4778	120.80	1.3680	1636.00	1.9365	6.5596
DE Mark	0.6125	1.0000	0.3756	0.6723	63.76	0.6563	8.3663	1.3760	4.3637
GB Sterling	1.6285	2.7495	1.0000	1.9672	2.2278	2.7552	3.0850	0.2947	0.9364
CHF Franc	0.6723	1.4778	0.5181	1.0000	103.74	0.7003	1.3663	1.2563	0.7033
JP Yen	0.0083	1.4040	0.5084	1.2244	1.0000	1.7334	14.02	167.46	4.7287
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0009	0.3625	0.6873	1404.69	0.8080	1.0000	11.33	3.3712
FR Franc	0.1752	0.2368	0.1075	25.8532	21.11	0.2396	33.29	33.2900	1.0000

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oils	Last	Previous	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	
Brent	19.50	20.25	SA Riyal	0.2667	0.4522	0.16375	0.39435	32.1673	
Crude	19.50	20.25	Qatar Dinar	0.2775	0.4718	0.17075	0.39435	32.1673	
Boys	19.50	20.25	KW Dinar	3.3014	5.5991	2.02716	4.88281	398.408	
Uthmaniyah	19.50	20.25	CY Pound	1.9642	3.3285	1.2054	2.9027	236.883	
UL Gas	195.00	195.00							

Metal Prices				Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Metal	Bid	Offer		Period	1-Month	3-Month	6-Month	1-Year
Gold (oz's)	363.35	363.85		USD	5.31	5.40	5.56	5.84
Silver (oz's)	5.25	5.35		DEM	5.75	5.81	5.91	6.12
Platinum (oz's)	392	393		JPY	0.35	0.36	0.37	0.38
Palladium (oz's)	1100	1110		FRF	3.20	3.23	3.28	3.34
Cu (3 Months)	N/A	N/A		ITL	7.31	7.30	7.15	6.97
Zinc (3 Months)	N/A	N/A						
Lead (3 Months)	N/A	N/A						
Ni (3 Months)	N/A	N/A						

Energy				* JOD Cross Rates			
Commodity	Last	Delivery		Currency	Buy	Sell	
Coffee (c/lb)	180.17	Spot		US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
Sugar (5/ton)	311.5	Spot		DE Mark	0.4172	0.4193	
Wheat (5/ton)	22.72	Spot		CHF Franc	0.1239	0.1248	
Soya (c/lb)	22.72	Spot		FR Franc	0.0687	0.0690	
Barley (5/ton)	2.39	Spot		NL Guilder	0.3721	0.374	

\* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

## THE Daily Crossword

### ACROSS

- 1 Andy's partner
- 5 Kingdom
- 10 Starch
- 14 Tia
- 15 Tedium
- 16 Earliest request
- 17 Fan the flames
- 18 Lend beauty to
- 19 Speak wildly
- 20 Apostates
- 23 Bustle
- 24 Attempt
- 25 Snake
- 28 Inspires with love
- 32 Angel's delight: abbr.
- 35 Wrapping material
- 37 Evil habit
- 38 — suey
- 39 Has a bare chance
- 42 Assistant
- 43 Gen. Robert —
- 44 Send up the — (imprison)
- 45 Sound levels: abbr.
- 46 First pitcher in a game
- 48 Notable period
- 49 King of France
- 50 — on (start to compute)
- 52 Is philanthropic
- 60 Stratford-upon-Avon
- 61 Concerning
- 62 Curve
- 64 Receipts
- 65 French river
- 66 Brand
- 67 Over again
- 68 Certain punches
- 69 Undergarment

### DOWN

- 1 TV alien
- 2 Handle roughly
- 3 Butter substitute
- 4 A condiment
- 5 Use one's head
- 6 Within: pref.
- 7 In a short time
- 8 Artificial fishing bait
- 9 Musician
- 10 Small branch with flowers
- 11 Jai —
- 12 Man
- 13 Vow
- 21 Delightful places
- 22 Paris money: abbr.
- 25 Syrian leader
- 26 Indian title of respect
- 27 Goats
- 29 Battling champ, once
- 30 Headress
- 31 Certain group
- 32 Push
- 33 Cowboy, at times
- 34 Horse — (film genre)
- 36 Wonder
- 38 Greek letter
- 40 — hang out (be completely candid)
- 41 Boo-boo
- 46 Distress signal
- 47 Makes jubilant
- 49 Restore
- 51 Liquid measures
- 52 Silly
- 53 The Terrible
- 54 Mark a ballot
- 55 One of the reads
- 56 Kind of cap
- 57 Ached
- 58 Cat's-paw
- 59 Berra
- 63 Soft drink

L	A	M	A	C	H	E	M	B	A	S
A	E	S	O	P	P	O	U	R	A	L
S	W	A	M	P	T	H	I	N	G	S
E	D	P	E	Y	I	N	G	S	T	E
R	E	G	A	L	E	S	A	T	R	I
E	R	O	S	A	B	R	I	D	G	E
A	L	L	T	H	E	D	E	E	P	O
R	E	D	C	R	O	S	S	D	O	E
E	L	I	D	E	A	L	M	O	N	D
S	N	A	P	S	A	G	A	I	N	
L	A	P	S	E	P	R	A	M	S	
A	M	O	S	D	E	L	T	A	F	O
N	O	N	E	E	P	E	E	I	D	A
D	A	D	S	B	E	N	S	T	E	N

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## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, MARCH 3, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) Make notes to yourself of any ideas which you have today, so you won't forget them in the days ahead. Stop dreaming about success and make it a reality for yourself and your loved ones who will be appreciative.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Check out some new recreations today which you can enjoy with your mate, however, stay within your budget. A wealthy friend can give you good advice concerning career activities, only if you are responsive.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) If you use your imagination today and try some new technique, you can get ahead much faster. Be sure you use much care in motion of any kind later, thereby you eliminate any difficulties present.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Contact important acquaintances today and make sure they know your intentions, thereby there won't be any misunderstandings. Avoid anyone who will hinder your progress and make your career activities less productive.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) If you get into any new activities today, be sure you keep them separate from your present endeavors. If you travel anywhere later this evening, don't over pack or you won't enjoy the experience ahead.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Sit down with your mate today and make plans for the days ahead, so that you can gain recognition from a bigwig. A business fellow associate can give you good advice, however, only if you are willing to listen.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Seize an opportunity today which will help you to improve your reputation and make you more recognizable to those in authority. Make a plan with a fellow associate and labour together for greater success.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) Be more energetic at your usual activities today, and you can gain greater benefits from your endeavors. Be more cooperative and helpful with your fellow associates, and thereby both of you will become successful.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) An individual connected with entertainment can be of assistance to you today, only if you are willing to learn. You can communicate well later this evening, however, don't be extravagant in your method of operation.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) This is a good day to have guests into your home, both old friends and newcomers. You can finish up those home projects at this time, so make the best of this opportunity and make your residence more attractive.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Your usual allies can give you much support for your pet project today, so ask for their assistance and make your endeavour successful. Stay around friends who have a sense of humour similar to your own tonight.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) You'll have an opportunity to improve your financial situation today and possibly to gain some property. Make sure you have a plan for this or you could discover that your course of action will become fruitful.

Birthstone of March: Aquamarine — Jasper.







## Fed Cup springs surprises; France survive gruelling test against Japan

PARIS (Agencies)— The Fed Cup was true to form and produced a series of upsets and surprises on the first day of this year's competition on Saturday.

Spain, winners in 1991, 1993, 1994 and 1995, faced a shock first-round defeat after losing both of the opening singles in their away World Group One clash against Belgium.

The United States, captained for the first time by former World number-one Martina Navratilova, ended the day 1-1 with the Netherlands.

The Czech Republic were also level-pegging 1-1 in their clash against depleted Germany in Mannheim.

France defeated Japan 4-1 in their Fed Cup World Group One tie on Sunday, but not until after two marathon matches and a surprise loss by top player Mary Pierce.

After comfortably winning both singles rubbers on Saturday, Pierce and Nathalie Tauziat spent over seven hours on court in two epic reverse singles matches.

Ai Sugiyama, world ranked 29 and Japan's number one, upset Australian Open finalist Pierce 7-5 6-7 6-4 in a three hour and 10 minute contest.

Pierce, ranked 12 in the world, forced Sugiyama to a tie break in the second set as the Japanese player showed some nervousness but she seemed to tire in the third as the match dragged on.

Tauziat's match lasted even longer as she needed four hours and five minutes to beat Naoko Sawamatsu

7-5 4-6 17-15.

The total of 54 games tied the record established in a 1974 Cup match between Spain and New Zealand, officials said.

The 32-game third set eclipsed the previous single-set record of 24 games recorded before the tournament rules were amended in 1995.

The French then went on to win the final match with Alexandra Fusai and Anne Sotouy beating Naoko Kijimuta and Kyoko Nagatsuka 7-5 6-4.

France go through to the semifinals in July while Japan must enter a relegation tournament and face possible demotion from the World Group.

Belgium upset the Spaniards with 43rd-ranked late substitute Els Callens making the most of Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario's poor form and loss of confidence to chalk up a 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) win.

Callens came in at the eleventh hour for Dominique Monami-Van Roost, who was forced to pull out with an abdominal injury.

Sanchez-Vicario, who is now being trained by big brother Emilio, battled hard in the second set but she was still clearly struggling to find her touch.

Sabine Appelmans then defeated Maria Luisa Serna 6-1, 4-6, 6-3.

Spain are without former Wimbledon champion Conchita Martinez.

The defending champions, the United States, got off to a poor start in Holland when



Nathalie Tauziat of France raises her fists a moment after defeating Naoko Sawamatsu of Japan in the second round of the Fed Cup World Group 1, Japan vs France in Tokyo. Tauziat won 7-5, 4-6, 17-15 and the French team proceed to the semi-finals (Reuters photo)

Mary Joe Fernandez was crushed in straight-sets 6-1, 6-4 by Miriam Oremans.

It was left to Chanda Rubin to level the tie with a hard-fought 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 win over big-serving Brenda Schultz-McCarthy.

Germany, facing an uphill task against the Czech Republic after the withdrawal of World No. 1 Steffi Graf and Anke Huber

because of injury, managed to end the first day level-pegging in Mannheim — thanks to 17-year-old Marlene Weingartner.

Weingartner pocketed the first rubber when she came back to beat lanky Ludmila Richterova 3-6, 7-5, 6-3.

Richterova only moved into the Czech team's front line when World No. 3 Jana

Novotna pulled out shortly before the opening match because of shingles.

It is still not confirmed if Novotna will be well enough to play Sunday's doubles.

Buoyed by Weingartner's unexpected victory, the Germans hoped to add another win when Barbara Rittner took on Adriana Gersi. But Gersi turned the tables round by scoring a 6-4, 6-2 win.

German team captain Klaus Hofmann admitted that he was surprised it was Weingartner and not Rittner who won Germany's first point.

"We expected it to be 1-1 after the first day — but the other way round," he confided. "We thought Rittner would win and Weingartner lose."

In World Group Two matches, Croatia were 2-0 up against Austria in Zagreb while Australia took a surprise 2-0 lead over South Africa in Durban — Rachel McQuillan scoring a dramatic 6-3, 7-6 (12/10) win over home number-one Amanda Coetzer.

World No.2 Martina Hingis kept Swiss hopes against the Slovak Republic alive in Kosice by winning her singles against Katarina Studenikova 6-1, 6-3 but team-mate Patty Schnyder went down in straight-sets against Karina Habsudova.

In the other World Group Two match in Seoul, Korea and Argentina were also all square on 1-1.

## 'Giantkillers' put out Paris St. Germain and Strasbourg

PARIS (AFP) — First Division Giants Paris St. Germain and Strasbourg crashed out of the French Cup Saturday as the 'part-timers' of Clermont Ferrand and Creteil reached the quarter-finals.

Paris St. Germain's recent nightmare run of poor results continued when they let slip a 4-1 lead with just 20 minutes left to play against Fourth Division Minnows Clermont at the home side's tiny Gabriel-Montpied Stadium.

Clermont surged back to make it 4-4 and then, after a goalless extra-time, won the penalty shoot-out.

Benoit Cauet opened the scoring for PSG after just 13 minutes when the Clermont defenders failed to clear a Vincent Guerin corner.

Brazilian striker Dely

Valdes made it 2-0 for the visitors after 25 minutes when he slotted home from close range after the Clermont keeper Enjolras failed to hold a sizzling drive from Patrice Loko.

Clermont came back into the march seven minutes into the second-half when Bessaque scored from the penalty spot after Ngotty had brought down Chastang. But PSG went clear again on the hour through Rai and then Loko looked to have put the issue beyond doubt when he made it 4-1 in the 70th minute.

The First Division Giants were then rocked back on their heels as Chastang and Bellec scored for the home side and Ngotty put into his own net.

In the penalty series Clermont made no mistakes

whereas Enjolras saved from both Paul Le Guen and Guerin.

The night's other shock was meted out by Third Division Creteil who defeated Strasbourg 1-0 thanks to a goal on half-time from Kharchaoui.

The defeats followed hard on the heels of the surprise elimination of last season's champions and cup winners Auxerre on Friday. Auxerre went out 1-0 to Second Division Troyes.

In Saturday's other matches, Bordeaux beat fellow First Division Cannes 1-0 and Nice scored twice in the last five minutes to put out Second Division Gueugnon.

Guingamp defeated Caen 1-0 and Laval won the all-Second Division clash against Niort by the same scoreline.



Russia's Varvara Zelenskaja raises her arms after setting the best time after the ninth race of the World Cup women's downhill series, on what will be the 1998 Winter Olympics Alpine skiing course in Hakuba, central Japan. Zelenskaja captured her third consecutive victory in the race, with a time of one minute 35.64 seconds, following her victory in the February 28 downhill race here. Zelenskaja jumped to the top in the World Cup women's downhill standings with 423 points, two points ahead of Swiss Heidi Zurbriggen after seven races (Reuters photo)

## Russia's Zelenskaja feels at home on Olympic hill

HAKUBA, Japan (AFP)

— Double downhill winner Warwara Zelenskaja found herself at home on the wet Japanese snow here, in conditions far removed from the main World Cup resorts on the other side of the world, she said after her victory.

"I just feel that the ocean is close," the 24-year-old from the Kamchatka Peninsula, in the Russian far east, said after winning the second downhill in three days on

the 1998 Olympic course here.

"The weather is the same, the wet weather. In the springtime, snow is the same," she said on the Hakuba Hills in the Japanese Alps region exposed to severe winter winds from Siberia.

Zelenskaja said her pair of Japanese-made Mizuno Skis were different to those she used on European and North American Pistes.

"Snow is wet here and they are good on wet

snow." Mizuno has provided skis and services to the cash-strapped Russian and Slovenian teams since the breakup of the communist block.

Zelenskaja usually needs to spend much of her off-season time with her team, training on European hills. But this year the camp will move on to Kamchatka to use summer snow on a volcano there.

## Camacho stops Leonard in 5th round

ATLANTIC CITY (AFP)

— Puerto Rico's Hector "Macho" Camacho spoiled 40-year-old Sugar Ray Leonard's comeback bid, stopping the gloved grandfather in the fifth round of their middleweight bout.

Leonard returned to retirement after his first bout in six years, which ended here early Sunday when the fight, dominated entirely by Camacho, was stopped one minute and eight seconds into the fifth round.

"My career is definitely over in the ring. I'm through," Leonard said. "Nobody wants to stop. But this is a pretty good indication."

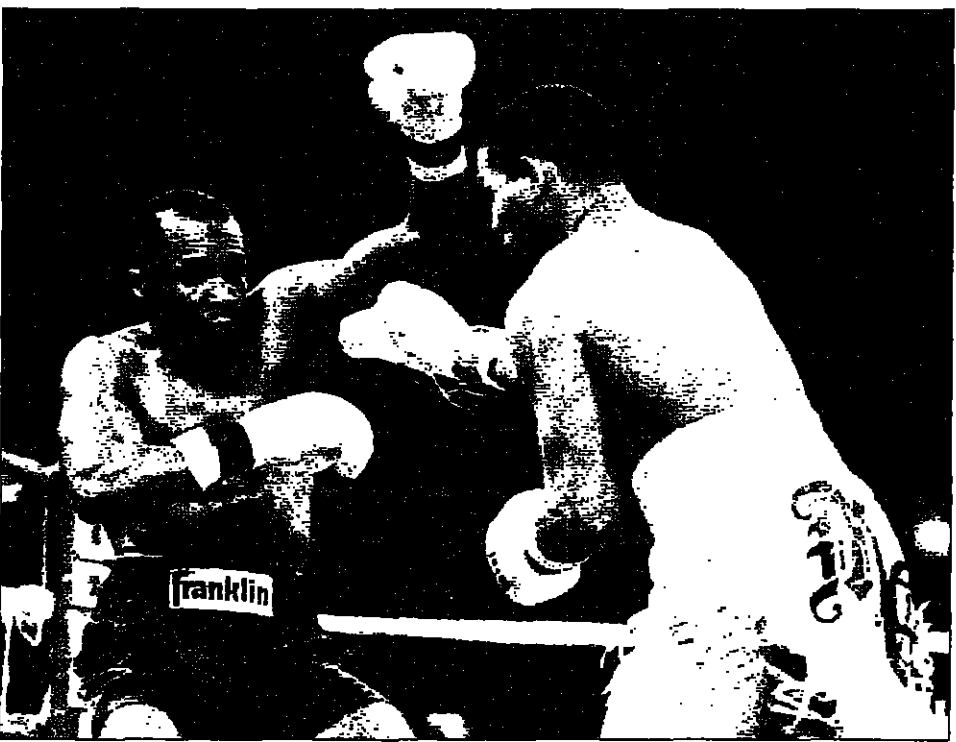
Leonard was sent to the canvas by Camacho with a combination early in the fifth round. He rose but was defenceless and pounded against the ropes until referee Joe Cortez gave Leonard his first technical knockout loss.

"No excuses. I just never got into it," Leonard said. "I was trying to establish my jab. I couldn't get myself established. Camacho had a perfect fight."

Camacho rose to 64-3 with one drawn, having stopped 30 foes.

This was his 19th consecutive victory and sets up a possible matchup against the winner next month between Oscar De La Hoya and Pernell Whitaker.

Leonard's career ends again with a record of 36 triumphs and three defeats and one draw. He claimed to have an injured right calf muscle but his punch-



Challenger Sugar Ray Leonard (L) loses his balance as he falls back after a blow from defending champion Hector "Macho" Camacho during the first round of their IBC middleweight title fight in Atlantic City. Camacho won in a fifth round TKO. Leonard has not fought in six years (Reuters photo)

es were clearly slower and weaker than those of his foe.

"I fought better than I thought I could fight when I stepped into the ring," Leonard said. "I could never really push off with my right leg. For a couple of minutes I was landing. But when I reached in, I didn't have the balance I once had."

Camacho backed up his guarantee of stopping Leonard, the pre-fight favourite of oddsmakers here. As Leonard and Camacho hugged after the fight, the winner was already predicting his vic-

tory would be tainted. "People are going to take this around and twist it because he was retired," Camacho said.

Camacho slammed Leonard off-balance in the first round and kept him on the defensive, with Leonard stumbling to the canvas during one of many retreats.

While Camacho scored in flurries, Leonard jabbed in vain, in the third round Camacho staggered Leonard with a left to the head. A cut opened over Leonard's left eye and Camacho finished him with continued pressure.

Leonard said he felt physically fine after the bout. His first retirement came in part due to a detached retina and there was concern it could be damaged in future fights.

Leonard returned to the ring for the first time since a 1991 loss to Terry Norris and was paid \$4 million, twice as much as Camacho.

Leonard was forced to wait in the ring for nearly 10 minutes, pacing as he watched Camacho enter wearing a gladiator's garb and being pulled slowly toward the ring in a makeshift chariot.

## McRae crashes through wall

NAIROBI (AFP) — Safari rally leader Colin McRae escaped unscathed after crashing through a wall when he swerved to avoid a pile of rocks left in the middle of the road by hooligans here Sunday.

McRae managed to get his Subaru back on the road and retain his lead.

The Scotsman took the lead early into Sunday's stage when overnight leader Armin Schwarz was forced to stop for repairs when the rear suspension of his Ford Escort snapped.

Schwarz was further delayed when the tread peeled off his rear tyres.

"The suspension is so soft the back end is sliding all over the place and our tyres are being destroyed," explained Schwarz.

Finn Tommi Makinen was forced to retire after a series of punctures crippled his Mitsubishi.

The retirement of the 1996 world champion left only four top drivers left in the rally.

On Saturday Carlos Sainz in a Ford Escort and Kenneth Eriksson driving a Subaru Impreza were forced to retire because of mechanical problems.

McRae is being chased by Britain's Richard Burns in a Mitsubishi and Ian Duncan in a Celica.

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& Conrad Dunn.... in

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**PHILADELPHIA "2"**

Brad Pitt, Julia Ormond,  
Anthony Hopkins  
& Aidan Quinn...in

**LEGENDS OF THE FALL**

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:699238  
**PLAZA**

Adel Imam, Shireen  
& Saeed Saleh  
**Bakhit Wa Adilah (2)**  
**Al Jardal Walkankah**

Shows: 12:00, 2:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL:677420  
**CONCORD**

CONCORD "1"  
CURT RUSSEL & STEVEN SEGAL...in  
**EXECUTIVE DECISION**

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CONCORD "2"  
Michael Jordan ...in  
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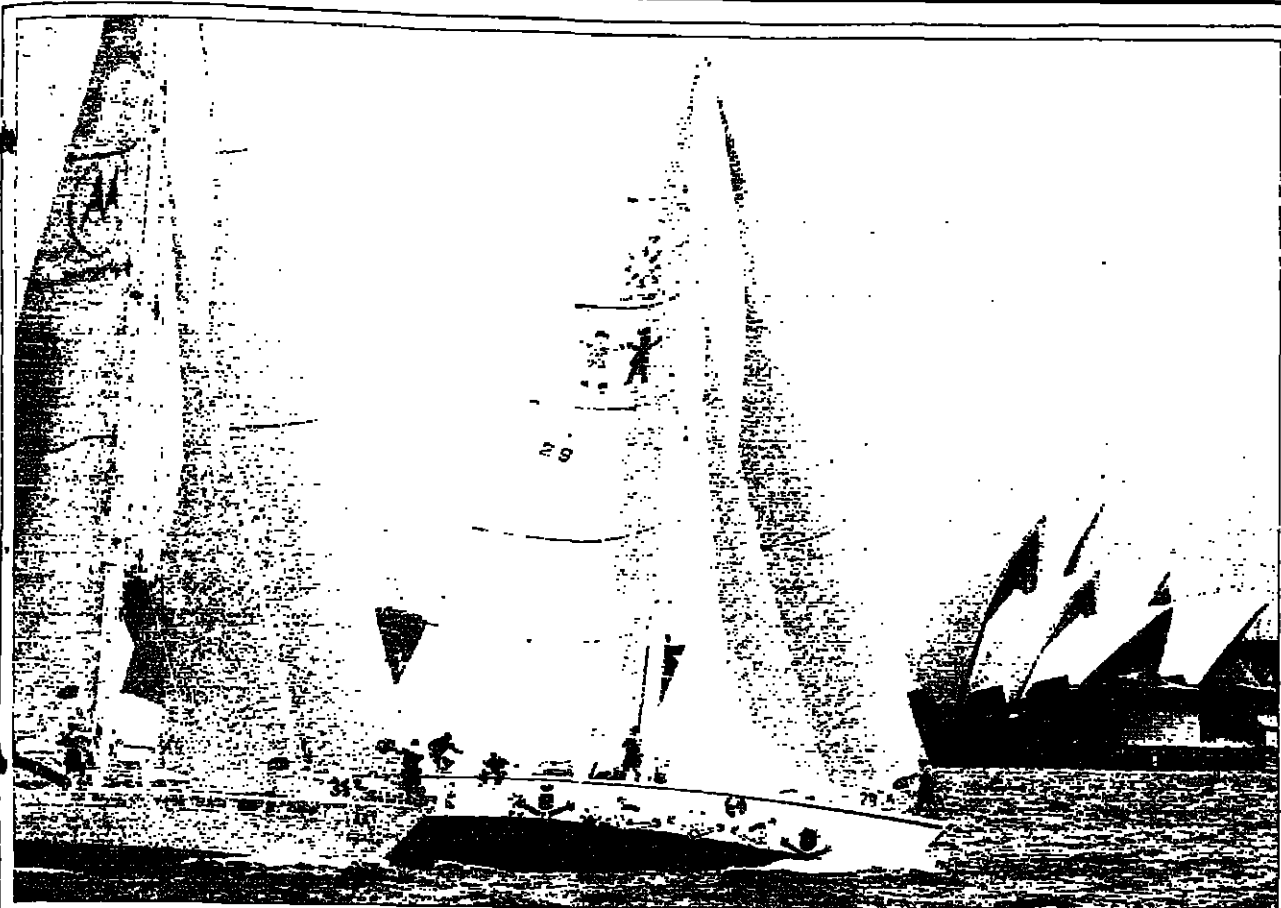
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Third leg winner 'Save the Children' fights for position with 'Motorola' (left) in front of the Sydney Opera House (right) before the start of the fourth leg in the 48,000 kilometre around-the-world Global Challenge yacht race. The field of 14 yachts are heading for Cape Town in South Africa (Reuters photo)

## Al Orthodoxy win Under-22 basketball title

AMMAN (J.T.) — Al Orthodoxy Sunday scored a 94-80 (49-39) win over Al Jazira to win the Under-22 Basketball Championship title — the first of the 1997 season competitions. The win ended Al Jazira's two year reign. Al Ahli came in third, Abu Nuseir fourth and Al Jalil fifth.

## Rockets beat Mavericks despite Barkley injury

HOUSTON (R) — Kevin Willis scored 26 points as the Houston Rockets overcame another injury to Charles Barkley for an 89-80 victory over the Dallas Mavericks Saturday.

Hakeem Olajuwon had 16 points and 11 rebounds, Mario Elie scored 14 points and handed out a career-high 10 assists and Matt Maloney scored 13 points for Houston, which won for the fifth time in seven games.

The 252-pound (114-kg) Barkley left the game in the first quarter after he suffered a lacerated left hip in a collision with Dallas centre Shawn Bradley, who is 7 foot 6 (2.29 metres) and a bony 248 pounds (112-kg).

Barkley was treated in the locker room before being sent to the hospital. Team doctors announced that a magnetic resonance imaging test on Barkley's hip was negative. They expect him to be sidelined for a week to 10 days.

"The enthusiasm level has to be built back up now that Charles is out," said Willis.

"It was a tough win without Charles and thank goodness it's not for a long period of time that he'll be out," Elie said. "Everyone stepped up and I'm feeling real good and real confident right now. It was a total team effort tonight."

The Rockets already are without their starting backcourt of Clyde Drexler and Brent Price. Price is out for the season after suffering a knee injury and Drexler is not expected back until late March due to a hamstring injury.

Michael Finley scored 14 points, Robert Pack added 13 and A.C. Green contributed 12 for Dallas, which lost for the eighth time in 11 games.

"Kevin Willis hurt us tonight and the Rockets were



Cleveland Cavaliers Bobby Phills goes up for two points as Boston Celtics Marty Conlon and Eric Williams (foreground) defend on the play in the first half at Gund Arena. Cleveland beat Boston 99-81 (Reuters photo)

still too strong on the inside, even without Charles Barkley," Mavericks coach Jim Clemons said.

At Washington, Chris Webber recorded his third straight triple-double against his former team as the Bulls won for just the fourth time in 14 games with a 118-108 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Webber had 23 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists for his seventh career triple-double and second this season, both against Golden State, the team he left three seasons ago after his rookie campaign.

Webber made 10-of-16

coach Bernie Bickerstaff.

"For us to win is the most important thing," Howard said. "We all had a good all-around game. Everyone was hitting their shots. This was a great birthday present for him."

At Cleveland, Terrell Brandon scored 13 of his 19 points in the third quarter as the Cavaliers cruised to a 99-81 victory over the Boston Celtics, who matched their longest losing streak in team history.

Rookie Vitaly Potapenko added 15 points in his first career start and Danny Ferry had 14 for Cleveland, which has won seven of its last nine games.

Antoine Walker scored 21 points and Todd Day had 18 and nine rebounds for Boston, which has dropped 13 straight games and 21 of 23. The Celtics previously lost 13 in a row in 1994.

In Milwaukee, Billy Owens scored a season-high 31 points and the Sacramento Kings shut down the Bucks in the second half for a 103-92 victory.

Mich Richmond recovered from a four-point outing against Chicago on Friday with 26 points for the Kings, who beat the Bucks for the fourth straight time. Sacramento went 2-2 on its four-game road trip.

Vin Baker had 20 points and 15 rebounds for Milwaukee, which managed just 35 second-half points and blew a 10-point halftime lead. Glenn Robinson finished with 18 points and 10 boards, but had only two points in the second half.

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# Arab Champions Cup Faisali face Morocco's Khreibkeh today

By Mufeed Hassouneh  
in Casablanca and  
Aleem Bamayan  
in Amman

AL FAISALI have the chance of making Jordanian soccer history when they meet Morocco's Khreibkeh in Casablanca. Morocco Monday to conclude the 3rd Arab Champions Cup which groups top four Arab teams.

Al Faisali will secure the title if they beat Khreibkeh provided Morocco's Al Raja beat Arab Champions League titleholders Egypt's Al Ahli or the match ends in a draw.

If the results of both matches come up otherwise a set of complicated possibilities will decide the standings and eventual champion with goal difference playing a pivotal role in the process.

"We expect a tough match but the players will give it all they have," Faisali's head coach Mazhar Saeed said Sunday referring to the fact that his team was burdened with injuries including leading goalie Anis Shafiq, Osama Talal, Rami Abu Fanar, and reserve goalie Walid Abu Hmeid.

Khreibkeh currently top the standings after their 3-2 win over Al Ahli in Saturday's match when Al Faisali also scored an

momentous win beating Moroccan champions and league-leaders Al Raja 2-1.

Al Ahli have 3 points in the overall standings but lead Al Faisali on goal difference thanks to the 4-0 win in the opening match.

Al Faisali have met Khreibkeh twice drawing 1-1 in Amman before losing 3-1 in the final round of the Arab Cup Winners Cup.

Finishing runner up in that championship qualified Al Faisali to become the first Jordanian team to participate in the elite event which groups the Arab World's top teams and aims at naming the best Arab team. The competitors are the top two teams of the Cup Winners Cup and League Champions.

Significant cash prizes await the participating teams with the winner receiving \$50,000, the runner-up \$25,000, the third place finisher \$15,000 and the fourth team \$10,000.

In addition, the Prince Faisal trophy and prize will be awarded to the ideal

team. Each team started the championship with 20 points. Two points were deducted for each yellow card booking and 6 points for each suspension. There will be prizes for top scorer, top goalie and best player.

Al Raja will receive \$50,000 for hosting the event.

Meanwhile, Arab Soccer Federation (ASF) officials said HRH Prince Abdullah, president of the Jordan Soccer Federation (JSF), would be holding a series of meetings with ASF President Prince Faisal Ben Fahd. Discussions are expected to centre on Jordanian soccer and how the Kingdom can utilise ASF seminars and programmes to develop the game in the country.

Talks would also centre on the Saudi experience and their advanced standing in Arab, Asian and international sports arenas.

Prince Abdullah was scheduled to arrive in Casablanca Sunday evening to attend the finals and hold

talks with the Egyptian and Moroccan soccer chiefs and other dignitaries invited to the championship.

The ASF has invited FIFA President Joao Havelange, Asian Football chief Sultan Ahmad Shah, African Football chief Issa Hayatou, and Egyptian Football Chairman Samir Zuhair.

The ASF praised Al Faisali's participation naming them as the "ASF team to watch."

Al Faisali's 29-member delegation includes players: Anis Shafiq, Walid Abu Hmeid, Freidon Saeed, Mohamad Mahadin, Ahmad Khalil, Firas Khalil, Ali Zu'bi, Ihab Nasr, Rami Abu Fanar, Osama Talal, Rateb Awadut, Ziyad Abu Shanab, Jamal Abu Abed, Subhi Suleiman, Hassuneh Sheikh, Hatem Agel, Haitham Shbouh, Jiryes Tadros, Mahmoud Matar, Ja'far Hammad, Mansour Tawiahah, Raed Jhour.

### STANDINGS

TEAM	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Khreibkeh	1	1	-	3	2	4
Ahli	1	-	1	6	3	3
Faisali	1	-	1	2	5	3
Raja	-	1	1	1	2	1

## Vacant site to house media at 2000 Games

SYDNEY (AFP) — The expected 6,000 international media representatives for the 2000 Sydney Olympics will be quartered at a former hospital site near the central Homebush venue in the west of the city, Olympics minister Michael Knight announced on Sunday.

The 50-hectare site at the vacant Lidcombe hospital, located four kilometres (2.5 miles) from Homebush, offered an ideal opportunity to accommodate a large proportion of the written and broadcast media near the games venue, Knight said.

"This is an excellent result because of the proximity to the main Games area."

From the media village, shuttle buses would operate to and from Homebush where the main press centre (MPC) and international broadcast centre (IBC) would operate, he said.

## Sampras rallies to reach final

PHILADELPHIA (AFP)

World No. 1 Pete Sampras rallied to beat unseeded Dutch qualifier Sjeng Schalken 3-6, 7-5, 6-3, here Saturday and reach the finals of a \$589,250-ATP tournament.

The 25-year-old Australian Open champion struggled but finally won his 19th match in a row by subduing the 20-year-old 88th-ranked Schalken.

Sampras will now play Australian Davis Cup hero Pat Rafter in the final. The 60th-ranked, 24-year-old Australian defeated South Africa's Grant Stafford 6-3, 6-4 in the other semifinal.

It will be Rafter's first appearance in an ATP singles final in three years. His last appearance in a final came when he won in Manchester in 1994. He also reached the Hong Kong final earlier that year but lost to Michael Chang.

Sampras will be bidding

for a third victory in the Philadelphia event on Sunday. He will also be seeking his third title of 1997 and the 47th of his career. He took the Australian Open crown in January and won last month in San Jose.

Schalken needed only 31 minutes to take the opening set, breaking Sampras three times.

"I didn't get off to a great start, losing my first service game," Sampras said. "He didn't make any errors and I was the one either making or breaking the point. I just hung in there and mentally stayed strong."

But the top-seed took advantage of a long cross-court backhand return by Schalken for a break in the 11th game of the second set.

Sampras then held to force a third set.

"Once I got to the third set, I felt he was starting to get tired," Sampras said.

"We had been playing some long, long points and he started to feel that toward the end of the match."

"A sweat-soaked" Sampras broke Schalken in the fifth and seventh games before the Dutchman recovered for one final break to pull within 3-5.

But after a hard-fought match, Schalken's unlikely title bid ended on a humbling match point foot fault.

"I was not throwing the ball up in the air on my serves very well," said Schalken. "You have to hit a good serve against him. If you don't, he's going to come back at you in a hurry. The pressure is always there. You try to serve the ball faster and my technique wasn't that good."

Schalken survived two qualifying matches and eliminated fifth seed Jason Stoltenberg of Australia in his first main-draw match.

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### VACANCY

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## Bahrain, Qatar agree to set up diplomatic ties

MANAMA (Agencies) — Qatar and Bahrain agreed Sunday to set aside their long-standing territorial dispute and establish diplomatic ties, 26 years after the two countries gained independence.

The decision was announced here after talks between the Bahraini foreign minister, Sheikh Mohammad Ben Mubarak Al Khalifa, and Qatar's foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad Ben Jasssem Al Thani, the official Gulf News Agency (GNA) reported.

"The two ministers agreed to establish embassies for each country, for the sake of continuing coordination and cooperation between them, and to guard their joint interests," the agency added.

Bahrain and Qatar, which both gained independence from Britain in 1971, have competing claims to the Hawar islands in the Gulf and the dispute is being heard by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at the Hague.

The two countries share a common cultural heritage but have never before exchanged ambassadors, which has stymied efforts by Gulf Arab states to forge political and economic unity.

Both sides agreed Sunday to "clear the atmosphere and improve the relations between them, as well as returning these relations to their previous level, which are based on the ties linking the two peoples of close and inherited family bonds," GNA added.

The emir of Bahrain, Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, met with the Qatar's foreign minister.

Bahrain angered its Gulf

Cooperation Council (GCC) partners in December with its unprecedented boycott of a summit of the six-nation organisation because it was being held in the Qatari capital Doha.

But Bahrain agreed to attend the GCC meeting last month with the European Union in a gesture of reconciliation. The GCC groups Qatar and Bahrain with Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates and Oman.

The other GCC states set up the mediating committee following the December summit in a bid to end the 60-year-old territorial dispute.

While Doha claims sovereignty to the Hawar islands held by Manama, Bahrain says it has rights to the Qatari region of Zubara.

The GCC committee proposed a compromise calling on both sides to stop their war of words through their news media and to pledge not to support opposition members from the other country.

The proposal does not centre on finding a solution to the dispute itself.

Sheikh Khalifa agreed earlier this month that the dispute should be settled through the ICJ, a change in policy by Bahrain which has always insisted in the past that the conflict should be settled within the GCC.

"Manama and Doha agreed to set up embassies in both countries to further coordination and cooperation between them," GNA said.

GNA said Sheikh Isa and the Qatari foreign minister discussed "close relations between the two brotherly countries."

## 'Lebanon planned Red Army arrests for 1 year'

TOKYO (AFP) — Lebanese authorities prepared for a year before reportedly arresting suspected Japanese Red Army members drawing on vital information gathered from police here, the Mainichi Shimbun said Sunday.

The newspaper, quoting sources close to the affair, said an investigator travelled to Japan in February 1996 to contact Japanese police.

He collected valuable information on the criminal records and activities of the Japanese Red Army, the paper said.

The same investigator was sent back in November to Tokyo to finalise the alleged arrest of Japanese Red Army members last month, Mainichi said.

The Lebanese government has still not officially confirmed the reported arrests of five or six Japanese nationals.

Japan's ambassador Yasuji Ishikagi said Friday in Beirut that Lebanon was holding several Asian nationals.

Judicial sources told AFP that nine Asians, including three Japanese, and a Lebanese nurse were being detained, adding that no further developments were expected in the case before Monday.

In a bid to try to clear up the confusion, Japan has dispatched senior envoy Hiroshi Hirabayashi, director of the council's office on external affairs under the prime minister's office, to Lebanon, Lebanese officials said Saturday.

He is due to hold talks on Monday with Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, and will deliver a letter from Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto calling for cooperation in transferring the suspects to Tokyo, Jiji Press said.

Mr. Hashimoto told reporters on Sunday: "We really need to clarify their identification first."

The Japanese envoy will also visit Syria on March 5 and 6 to discuss the Japanese Red Army issue, the Japanese Foreign Ministry said Sunday.

Mr. Hirabayashi is to hold talks with high-ranking officials of Syria, which is seen to have strong influence on the issue, the ministry said.

The Japanese Red Army fostered close links with radical Palestinian groups in the early 1970s and Red Army members were responsible for a bloody attack at Tel Aviv's Lod airport in May 1972 that left 26 people dead.



Women cry amid the rubble remaining from their homes on Sunday after the devastating earthquake which hit the northwestern Iranian province of Ardabil on Friday (AFP photo)

## Death toll in Iran quake could be 3,000; bad weather snags rescue

SHIRAN, Iran (AP) — Temperatures plunged and a blanket of snow covered northwestern Iran on Sunday, hampering rescue teams trying to reach villages devastated by a massive earthquake and forcing survivors to struggle to keep warm.

The earthquake that struck Friday has claimed at least 3,000 lives, rescue and aid workers say. The official toll released by the government stood at 554, but was expected to rise. The government said at least 2,000 were injured.

The quake, which registered 5.5 degrees on the Richter scale, killed 554 people and left more than 2,400 injured, according to the latest provisional toll given by the Iranian authorities.

The tremor, which occurred at 4:31 p.m. Friday (1301 GMT), destroyed or damaged 110 villages in a mountainous region of Ardabil province in Iranian Azerbaijan near the Caspian

Sea, according to the Iranian Red Crescent.

Thousands of head of livestock perished in the quake, the Red Crescent said.

Heavy snowfall followed by strong winds complicated relief operations arriving from adjoining provinces.

Traffic was congested on the main highway to Ardabil as dozens of trucks carrying aid came to a halt on a narrow, windy road along the Caspian coast covered with icy snow.

Several trucks carrying tents and blankets were unable to advance on the road surrounded by thick forest because of poor visibility, creating a bottle-neck.

Ardabil, in a mountainous, occasionally inaccessible region west of the Caspian, is reputed to be one of the coldest areas in Iran.

A rescuer in Ardabil told reporters that about 40 people had been pulled out of the wreckage alive some 24 hours after the quake. He said freezing weather and rough terrain

diminished the chances of saving more lives.

State television said the authorities had wrapped up their search and rescue operations, without giving more details. It briefly showed images of aid arriving to the quake-stricken area, but did not show any victims.

Tents, blankets, canned food as well as heaters and stoves were shown being distributed.

Hundreds of people have been mobilised from the police, the Red Crescent and volunteer groups to conduct rescue operations and provide relief supplies.

Efforts are also underway to shelter the more than 35,000 homeless, many of whom have been temporarily lodged in mosques or in relatives' houses.

The authorities have appealed for public assistance for the victims, saying more blankets, clothing, stoves and heaters were needed. A national bank account has

been opened to collect cash contributions.

The authorities in Ardabil declared three days of mourning for the victims.

Iranian spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani dispatched separate teams to the disaster areas to help coordinate relief operations.

It was the second deadly quake to hit northern Iran in the past month. On Feb. 4, two earthquakes left 79 people dead and 25,000 homeless in the Bodjurd region of northeastern Iran.

Friday's tremor was felt in neighbouring provinces and some 200 aftershocks have been recorded.

The quake shattered windows in many buildings in the main city of Ardabil, which has a population of 600,000, and telecommunications, water and electricity networks have been damaged in many nearby districts.

## Contest heats up for Israeli Labour leadership

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Yossi Beilin, a former minister who oversaw the Arab-Israeli peace process, joined the race on Sunday to replace former Prime Minister Shimon Peres as head of Israel's opposition Labour Party.

Shlomo Ben Ami, a member of the Israeli parliament, the Knesset, also presented his candidacy for the Post Sunday, a Labour spokesman said.

Two other candidates, former armed forces Chief of Staff Ehud Barak and former Health Minister Ephraim Sneh, are also vying for the job, for which Mr. Peres will not compete for the first time in 23 years.

Mr. Barak, a former foreign minister, is considered the favourite.

Like former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was assassinated in November 1995, he has a strong military background, reassuring to voters concerned by security issue 3.

Mr. Barak's main rival is Mr. Beilin, who represents the left-wing of the party and "doves" who support the creation of a Palestinian state.

The Labour Party's 200,000 members will select the leader June 3 who will run for the prime ministership in elections in the year 2000.

Mr. Peres has twice been prime minister but has never won election to the post.

Most recently, he ascended to the prime ministership when Rabin was killed, but was ousted in May 1996 elections by Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu.



## U.S. aid to Russia nicked at Heathrow

LONDON (AFP) — A bag containing \$2.5 million in U.S. aid to Russia, was stolen last Tuesday during a stopover at London's Heathrow airport, the Mail on Sunday reported. The cash vanished despite being under constant surveillance by British Airways personnel in a top security area of the airport's freight zone, the paper said. The money in large denomination notes was part of a consignment of \$10 million from the Republic Bank of New York used by the U.S. treasury to deliver money to Russia. It was to be delivered to the Russian Toko Bank. Police suspected the existence of an inside accomplice and were questioning the 40 members of staff and security guards, the paper said.

## Taylor back in hospital

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Movie star Elizabeth Taylor was readmitted to hospital here on Saturday after suffering a mild seizure following her surgery for a benign brain tumor. Taylor's publicist Shirine Ann Coburn told a local radio station that Taylor was readmitted to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center around 4 p.m. (0000 Sunday GMT). Coburn said Taylor was conscious and able to speak and was to be examined on Sunday by doctors. Coburn said the seizure is not uncommon following the kind of brain surgery Taylor had. Doctors successfully completed an operation on Taylor Feb. 20 to remove a tumor the size of a golf ball from the lining of her brain. A Cedars-Sinai spokesman said. Doctors used a computer-generated neurological "navigation" system that provides surgeons a three-dimensional view of the tumor while performing the procedure, a hospital spokesman said.

## Endangered reptile stolen from zoo

SAN FRANCISCO (R) — A nine-year-old male broad-snouted caiman, an endangered crocodilian described as aggressive and dangerous, was reported missing on Saturday by zoo officials. "We are very concerned about this animal," said Mike Sulak, a curator at the zoo. "Not only for his welfare, but if handled improperly or if provoked, he can bite." The 1.1 metre caiman, which has no name, is the larger of two caimans in San Francisco's collection. Broad-snouted caimans, found in South America, are similar to alligators in appearance, but with greenish-brown markings. They can grow to three metres at maturity. Caimans are generally smaller than their cousin, the alligator, "but are much more aggressive," Sulak said.

## Oasis appeals against 'piracy'

LONDON (AFP) — The British rock band Oasis have called in the police to investigate an attempt to sell a pirate copy of tracks from their next album to a national newspaper, a band spokesman said. The claim comes as work continues on the third album — about which the band have been highly secretive — at a studio in Hampstead, north-west London. A Scotland Yard spokeswoman said: "Police at Hampstead have received an allegation of theft from business premises at Hampstead. 'Inquiries are still at an early stage. Hampstead CID are handling it and we are not discussing it any further.' In a statement issued to the Press Association news agency, the band spokesman said: "Oasis have referred to the metropolitan police reports that a tape, purported to be the forthcoming Oasis' album, is being presented to a national newspaper."

## Iraq renews charges U.S. blocking food shipments

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq again accused the United States on Sunday of delaying the arrival of badly-needed food and medicines in a partial lifting of sanctions under the humanitarian deal with the United Nations.

"More than two and half months after the signing of the accord, neither food nor medicines have yet to arrive in Iraq because of the American 'obstacles,'" President Saddam Hussein's cabinet said in a statement on government radio.

Iraq, crippled by six years of sanctions, will not receive its first shipment of humanitarian supplies before April, despite Baghdad's insistence that the delivery be sped up, officials said Saturday.

A U.N. official in Baghdad, however, told AFP earlier that the first deliveries of food and medicines were expected before the end of March.

Under the oil-for-food

agreement struck between the U.N. and Baghdad in December, Iraq is allowed to export \$2 billion worth of oil in six months, in return for food and medicine.

But Baghdad has lodged an official complaint with the United Nations, protesting that more than two months after the deal was concluded, nothing has yet arrived to ease the suffering of Iraq's 20 million people.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan has said last week that the first shipments would arrive at the weekend, but Under-Secretary-General Yasushi Akashi later said he expected the first food and medical supplies to reach Iraq in mid-March.

Mr. Akashi said some countries on the Security Council did not want distribution to begin until the main complement of U.N. monitors who are to supervise the distribution were on the ground, which would occur about March 15.

## Turkey sends special envoy to Iran after diplomatic spat

TEHRAN (Agencies) — A senior Turkish official is in Iran with a message from President Suleyman Demirel for Iranian head of state Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani amid a diplomatic row between the two neighbours, Tehran Radio said.

Deputy Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Ali Tugyan arrived late Saturday and was to hold talks with several Iranian officials.

Details of the message were reported in Ankara on Saturday after the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Mr. Tugyan was going to Tehran as a special envoy to hand the letter to Mr. Rafsanjani.

In the letter, Mr. Demirel asked Iran to stop meddling in its internal affairs, adding that the two countries "must be more attentive on certain points" and "respect the principle of non-interference" in each other's domestic issues.

Mr. Demirel also referred to Iran's willingness to let Turkish Kurdish rebels operate from inside its territory, stressing Turkey's "continuing concern" over border security.

Iran on Saturday ordered out the Turkish ambassador in Tehran and another diplomat after Ankara said it was expelling an Iranian consul after he strongly criticised Turkish military officials.

Hassan Ruhani, secretary of the national security council, Iran's highest political and

military decision-making body, on Sunday blamed the crisis on "American plots" and expressed hope the two neighbours could resolve their differences.

The United States, seeking to isolate Iran for its alleged support of terrorism, has urged Ankara not to strengthen economic links with Tehran.

Several Iranian newspapers blamed Turkey for "provoking" the diplomatic row.

But the English-language newspaper Iran News urged the foreign ministry to "exercise restraint and try to diffuse U.S. and Israel plots."

Press reports Sunday said the military handed Mr. Erbakan a 20-point list of measures aimed at halting creeping Islamisation in Turkey and thwarting alleged Iranian efforts to destabilise the Turkish government.

The plan included a ban on pro-Sharia propaganda on pro-Islamic television and radio, tighter restrictions on religious dress, and measures to prevent militants entering the state administration.

It demanded a strict application of eight laws on the secular principles of Turkey's constitution, and the closure of Koranic teaching institutions controlled by fundamentalists (see page 2).

But Mr. Erbakan, speaking before a Welfare Party meeting, denied there was a split with the military.

## Abu Marzouk wants to give up his green card, leave U.S.

NEW YORK (AP) — Outside New York's marriage bureau, hundreds of illegal immigrants line up to be licensed to marry Americans in the hope the marriage will provide a green card to let them stay in the United States.

A few metres away, inside the Metropolitan Correctional Centre, Musa Abu Marzouk, an Arab the U.S. government considers a terrorist, is eager to give his green card back. He has cancelled his plans to become an American.

In solitary confinement for 18 months, the leader of the militant Hamas organisation wants so badly to

leave his adopted country that he has asked to be extradited to face charges in Israel or to be deported to an Arab country.

"I thought there's justice, freedom of speech and human rights here," Abu Marzouk said in an interview Friday, flicking his hand dismissively.

"But I was wrong." A prosperous businessman who has lived intermittently in the United States since 1982, Mr. Abu Marzouk was head of the Hamas politburo in July 1995 when he arrived at John F. Kennedy International Airport and was immediately detained.

His name was on an Immigration Service (INS) watch list of people suspected of involvement in "terrorist" activity.

Mr. Abu Marzouk, who insists he is not involved with the violent Hamas wing that has bombed buses in Israel, said he does not know which government agency put him on the list. He thinks he was "trapped" to be eventually delivered to Israel. The INS did not return calls on circumstances of the arrest.

Israel requested Mr. Abu Marzouk's extradition immediately after his detention, alleging he financed

and planned attacks against Israelis. U.S. District Judge Kevin Duffy found probable cause last May to believe he joined in Hamas attacks in Israel from 1990 to 1994 that killed 47 people, and Mr. Duffy granted the Israeli request.

Last October, U.S. District Judge Kimba Wood denied Mr. Abu Marzouk's petition to avoid extradition. Mr. Abu Marzouk challenged the order, then dropped his appeal last month.

Sitting in a beige plastic chair in the jail's ninth floor visitors room, Mr. Abu Marzouk said he has been treated unfairly — he cited Mr. Wood's order —

because he is a Muslim and a Palestinian.

"A Palestinian cannot be sent back to Israel without taking into consideration the political issue," Mr. Abu Marzouk said, sporting a trim beard and moustache and dressed in a bright orange prison uniform and dark blue sneakers. "But when it comes to Israeli interests, there's no room for American justice."

Mr. Abu Marzouk, known as an astute and pragmatic politician, was not allowed to speak Arabic in the hour-long interview. The maximum-security prison's information officer, Robert Manco, who sat in on the

interview, did not explain why.

While denying he masterminded any attacks against Israel, Mr. Abu Marzouk said Hamas will continue its "resistance," a euphemism for suicide attacks, until Palestinians get their rights. Those include Israel's withdrawal from the occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab East Jerusalem, territories occupied in the 1967 war, removal of Jewish settlements from those areas, release of Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, and repatriation of Palestinian refugees.

Asked whether he advocates Israel's "elimination," the Hamas war cry that has sent youths on suicide missions, Mr. Abu Marzouk shrugged his shoulders.

"Israel is the strongest country in the Middle East," he said, "and for any kind of practical solution we have to consider that."

Whenever he leaves the United States, his eventual destination is uncertain. He could prove a political embarrassment as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu makes tentative moves towards mending fences with Arab countries. Sources close to Mr. Abu Marzouk said he could be sent to Jordan, Egypt or Yemen.

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